1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
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rail-head below the Eastern Ghat mountains to Jeypore and the Bastar border was continued thence to Jagdalpur; subsequently roads have gradually been driven westward to Dantewara, Bijapur, Kutru and Bhopalpatnam, and southward to Sukma and Konta; the most recent development has been many miles of forest roads, constructed either as feeder roads to the Raipur and Rajnandgaon roads, or to link up the forests of Dantewara and the south with the Godavari at Tarlagudam, Cherla and Dummagudam or the Kolab-Sabari at Mismagudam and Konta. The Raipur road is now motorable throughout the year, and there is a daily mail and passenger service by it to Kanker and Dhamtari. A railway connexion with the new Raipur-Vizianagram line has been surveyed, and would have been under construction but for the world-wide financial depression. The revenue of the State has risen from about Rs. 30,000 in 1855, then received in kind or in cowry shells at a rate of 2,880 to the rupee, to well over a million rupees.

So the old order is doomed; and with the motor-bus abroad in the land and scores of aboriginals every month seeking work on the public works of the State, in the Assam tea gardens or in the towns of the Godavari valley, with the railway administration feeling this last great blank of 300 miles from Raipur to Salur by 250 from Titlagarh in Kalahandi State to Singareni in Hyderabad a slur to be removed as soon as funds permit, change comes ever faster. My successors and I, like our predecessors, are guilty of accelerating change; but we can on the one hand plead that when we came a return to the old isolation was not practical politics, and on the other that we have tried before it was too late to strengthen and revive the old tribal *panchayat* organization and restore its jurisdiction in civil and in all but serious criminal offences, to check the drunkenness made rampant by a bad excise system, to prevent the further bestowal of aboriginal villages on alien *thekadari* (lessees) and to make the post of village headman one of honour and responsibility instead of one to be held reluctantly by some dummy with no influence in the village, to abolish *bisaha*, to deprive village lessees of the right of taking forced labour, to minimize the right of officials to take it and to regulate the still necessary State demands for road and other labour so as to inconvenience the cultivator as little as possible, to see that it is paid for, and to abolish bondservice. Much of great interest could be written on the effects and reactions of the administrative measures of the last fifty years sketched in these last few pages. But the purpose of this book is to place on record while there is yet time an account of the way of life prevalent among the Maria tribes of Bastar, perhaps now the most primitive

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and to make him live by himself on the outskirts of the village, so that in the end he becomes almost a separate low caste. This, however, has not gone nearly as far among the Hill Marias as among the Bison-horn.

To the south, along the Indrawati valley, the Hill Marias are influenced strongly by the Bison-horn Marias, and the area concerned is marked on the map by the letter H. The influence of the Bison-horn Marias gets less as you go west down the valley towards Kutru, and beyond Kutru is replaced by that of the Telugu-influenced Koitor of the riverain tract, known generally in those parts as Dorlas. There is no doubt that the inhabitants of most of these villages near the river were once Hill Marias. They seem to have been enumerated as Murias in the 1931 census, and are included in the 15,000 persons whom I have indicated at the end of my account of the Murias as wrongly enumerated at census as Murias. Where the Hill Marias are the immediate neighbours of the Bison-horn Marias, the influence of the latter is strong. In theory, according to local legend the Mander, a tributary running more or less east to west and joining the Indrawati on its *southern* bank near Barsur, is the boundary between the two kinds of Marias, with the Indrawati as the boundary west of the confluence. Here the Hill Marias know the Bison-horn Marias as Dandami Koitor; but the name is not universal in Bastar, and I have therefore preferred to call them Bison-horn because the wearing of bison-horns by their male dancers is so obvious a peculiarity of the tribe. Formerly, the legend says, Pat Raja, the log-god of Mornar in the Mangnar *pargana* who is regarded almost as the overlord of all the log-gods of the Hill Marias, and his wife's brother Use Modia, the log-god of the Lekami clan at Ghotpal, a large Bison-horn village south of the Indrawati, between Barsur and Gidam, divided up the Hill and Bison-horn Marias into *dalelkai* and *akomawa* clans (brother-clans and wife-clans), and in those days the Hill Marias used to intermarry with the Bison-horn, and each used to attend the other's festivals. One day, as the Gumelor clan of Hill Marias, which occupies a group of villages in Bhairamgarh Mar, Dantewara Mar and Mangnar, was trooping to Ghotpal to dance at the Koqsar festival there, carrying their axes on their shoulders, a Gume with his axe accidentally severed the sem beam vine of the Old Widow (*Kuram Mutia's*), who thereupon put a curse on all the Hill Marias and forbade them ever again to come south of the Mander river for social or religious purposes. Since then, according to the Hill Marias, intermarriage and participation in each other's festivals has ceased. On the other

Hill Marias of Indrawati valley, influenced by Bison-horn Marias or Dorla Koitor

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582 hand some Hill Marias say that there is no theoretic obstacle to intermarriage, but that actually 'it isn't done', though they occasionally take part in each other's festivals. The Bison-horn ●177 style of dancing with long *dol* drums is gradually spreading among 535 the lower villages just north of the Indrawati. Hudala Karka, for example, some eight miles from Barsur and on the northern bank of the river, now dances entirely in Bison-horn style, and claims to be a Bison-horn village, the claim being admitted by the Bison-horn Maria *pargana* headman in theory, and in practice by intermarriage with undoubted Bison-horn villages; but in several houses I found old Hill Maria dancing shields (*moghi*) and buttock-bells, and the older men admitted that when they were young they 177 danced in the Hill Maria style. Another sign of this is that Hurra [176] Gunda, the log-god of the Tamo clan at Tumirgunda, near Hudala Karka, is also the log-god of the Atami clan of Hudala Kārka and of two other Atami villages south of the Indrawati. The clan-priest of the god is a Tamo, and the Tamo villages of Tumirgunda and Padmeta still dance in Hill Maria style. In a few years, therefore, the Bison-horn Marias will have adopted the valley villages north of the Indrawati; the *pargana* headman already virtually claims them as such, since they are under his direct jurisdiction and not that of the Hill Maria *chalki* or assistant appointed to help him [197] manage the eight Hill Maria villages of his *pargana*. In speech, too, they are approximating more and more to the Bison-horn Marias, as there is a marked absence of the harsh guttural sounds so characteristic of the Hill Maria language, and they use the Bison-horn technical social and religious terms.

101 Westward along the valley, as observed above, Bison-horn 177 Maria influence gets less. For a few miles, roughly from Nelasnar to Jegur on the Matawara-Kutru road, and in the village of Ketulnar beyond Jegur, the people are now known as Murias but are really Hill Maria stock, and still dance in Hill Maria style. Ketulnar still intermarries with the hill villages of the Kutru Mar *pargana*. The villagers of Bheriabhum, on the south bank opposite their former village of Pali, five or six miles north of Bhairamgarh, are of the Hill Farsal clan, and cannot be distinguished from Farsalor of the hills. In the hill villages above the valley I verified occasional marriages with girls from the valley villages and vice versa.

101 The tract west and south-west of Kutru, marked by the letter L on the ethnographic map, contains a very scanty population, which appears to be Hill Maria in origin, much modified by contact with the Telugu-influenced Dorla Koitor from the south, who are shown by the letter K. These mixed elements also were returned

[See cat. 46, p. 418. - Analyst]

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292 garments as soon as possible. In their youth they had been sent with a party of men and women as exhibits to the Allahabad Exhibition, where Boranga had celebrated his marriage *coram publico Indico*; they brought back with them from Allahabad a bigger suspicion of the *Kosor*, as they, like Gonds all over the Central Provinces, call all Hindus, a coat and waistcoat and blankets, and a taste for *kappu* or opium which luckily was not inherited by Baranga's son, the present headman, or any of the villagers.

291 As in Glasfurd's day, the women go with breasts uncovered. Very old women occasionally hobble about inside their huts completely naked. The square patch of cloth suspended between the legs from a waist-cord on which bamboo rings were strung, which Glasfurd saw as the sole garment of some children and elderly women, is the garment known as *mudang*, worn only by females. It is to-day definitely intimate underwear, to be seen by no one save the husband, except in the case of very little girls who, when six or so, wear it for the first time as their only garment. Brass rings made by the Ghasia (Gharwá) brass-workers in bazaar places in the plains such as Gidam, Dhaurai and Narainpur, have replaced the bamboo rings of Glasfurd's time. The cord on which they are strung is sometimes a thin piece of cane. A mother buys a few rings for her little girls whenever she has a pice or two to spare at her visits to the markets; and the cord becomes nearly full of rings when the girl is nubile. The *mudang* cord is never removed, even at child-birth. The cloth attached to it is usually a strip of old rag torn off a worn-out loin-cloth. It has already been stated that women keep it on when bathing. The *mudang* is buried or burned with the woman.

The cord full of rings is obvious under the top of every woman's loin-cloth, as a sort of ridge. The cloth itself is folded over the rings, and hangs down all round over the loins and buttocks, without being passed between the legs. It is therefore not revealing like the men's cloth. Occasionally women wear a small sheet thrown carelessly across the breasts and over the left shoulder in imitation of the custom gradually spreading in the Bison-horn country; and a cloth of this kind is used for supporting a baby, who rides on his mother's right or left hip with the cloth drawn tight over his little buttocks and up to his armpits and thence fastened over her other shoulder. Even for dancing a woman has no other clothes.

301 Glasfurd noted in 1862 that few of the Hill Marias possessed the beads that other Marias liked so much. The older men still wear little of this kind; a few have a single necklet of dirty yellow beads made of small chopped sections of pea-fowl's lower leg-bone about 5 mm. in length. Occasionally

Ornaments

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301 they have similar necklets of little sections of wood or of seeds. The middle-aged and particularly the young have now made up for any former lack of beads by going to the opposite extreme in the profusion and variety of their ornaments. They have borrowed ●[177] freely from the fashions of the Jhorias and Murias on the one side and on the other from the Bison-horn Marias, but in an eclectic way, and showing marked individual taste. They have no use for the humming-top shaped greenish-yellow glass or the tubular scarlet beads so popular with the Bison-horn Maria, nor for the small speckled beads which Czecho-Slovakia is now sending to the bazaars of the north; they like small primary coloured beads of the old 'hundreds and thousands' type, but large enough to be threaded with ease, while their women still prefer the large, almost cylindrical but rounded-edge pure white beads of uneven size that seventy years ago were the fashion among the Marias of the plains. On the whole the women have borrowed mostly from the Bison-horn fashions, and the men from those of the north, particularly the Jhorias. On their arms the men have tight-fitting armlets of brass or 'jarman' (an aluminium alloy) just above their elbows, from one to five in number. Round their necks they have up to six collars of coloured beads sometimes six-deep, arranged according to individual colour tastes, but generally in vertical bars of colour with alternate bars of white. From large ear-rings 4 or 5 cm. in [304] diameter worn in a slit-hole pierced in the cartilage just below the helix and above the front upper insertion point of the auricle, hang nearly to the shoulders tassels made of three or four strings of beads threaded singly with a similar colour arrangement, ending with little tufts of bright wool; and fillets of the same bead-work are worn either loosely over the forehead and temples, or higher round the crest of the head, or looped from ears to hair-tuft. The intricacy and symmetry of the bright bead-work produces very pleasing patterns; the 'girl friend' usually arranges the beads for the youth. Older men more often wear small brass chains round the ears and hair-tuft than bead fillets. The large ring already referred to is first made in the form of a crescent blade of aluminium alloy, one of the tapered ends being passed through the slit-hole in the cartilage and hooked into the loop formed by bending the other tapered end to form a little eyelet, the remaining metal being then whipped spirally round the metal from which it tapered. Sometimes smaller rings of the same type are made of brass, a blue or red glass bead being threaded just inside the eyelet, and worn in a hole in the 304 tragus of the ear, or the antitragus. Innumerable holes are pierced 301 through the fold of the helix, in which are worn little rings of thin, plain brass wire; there may even be a double row of these right

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be severed, trimming the break with the knife held and used in the normal cutting position; he carves patterns in relief with the sharp point, or, holding the knife vertically, rolls the handle between the flat palms of his hand so as to drill holes with the point, trimming the edges of the holes with a burning ember. 411

The Bison-horn Maria uses a similar knife, often much larger, and seldom with a sheath. His *banda* is like a dao, but it is really a glorified and enlarged knife, with a thick end, and sometimes a pronounced bend or angle in the centre of the cutting edge; he uses this for lopping thick saplings or bamboo culms. But the use of the *banda* is not universal, and may be borrowed from Parjas or other tribes to the east. Similar weapons, but socketed on to long shafts of bamboo, and known as *gagra*, are used by the northern Murias and Jhorias, occasionally by Hill Marias, as weapons of offence and defence or billhooks for bamboo and saplings; the ordinary *gagra* has a concavely curved edge and a point, the *chhuri gagra* a convex edge and no point, while the *bhalu gagra* has an edge curving concavely from the top to a bend about half way along its length, and thence concavely to the socket. [177] ●

The Hill Maria calls his axe *maq'su*, which is the hill gutturalized version of the ordinary Gondi word *maras* used all over the Central Provinces. The Bison-horn Maria uses a totally different word for his axe of this shape, *godal*. The Halbi word is *tangya*. Like the Naga axe, the *maq'su* or *godal*[1] is an iron blade, decidedly suggestive of a long stone celt in form ⁷; but unlike that axe, the butt of the blade ends in a socket for the haft, not in a tang inserted in a hole in the haft. The cutting edge of the blade among the Hill Marias seldom exceeds 7 cm. width, and 15 cm. is the maximum length of the blade from the cutting edge to the socket, which encloses a haft 4 or 5 cm. in diameter. It has a pronounced 'waist' just before the socket, but this is far more marked on the longer Muria *maras* than on *maq'su* or *godal*. The *godal* is usually rather more massive than the *maq'su*. The blacksmith, when giving an axe its first edge or a new edge to a blunt axe, heats the axe well in his forge, and thoroughly hammers the actual edge. He then heats it again, and hammers it flat on each side till he forms a new edge. He repeats the heating, and grinds down the edge by rubbing each side down a lump of stone. After a further slight heating he dips it in cold water to temper the edge, which is then ready for use. The haft is set at slightly less than a right-angle to the blade, the thick socket being wedged with a thin slip of wood. 412 412 326

A type of axe found still sometimes in the hill villages, where it is known as *pata andawna maq'su* (the song-and-dance axe, because 412 535

[1] Hutton, *Angami Nagas*, p. 65.

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CHAPTER V

CHARACTER

'Without exception they are the most cheerful, light-hearted people I have met with, always laughing and joking among themselves. Seldom does a Maria village resound with quarrels or wrangling among either sex: and in this respect they present a marked contrast to those in more civilized tracts. They, in common with many other wild races, bear a singular character for truthfulness and honesty, and when once they get over the feeling of shyness, which is natural to them, they are exceedingly frank and communicative. Curious as all savages, the commonest article of domestic use is to them an object of interest; they are quick to observe and to learn.'—Glasfurd's 1862 Report, para. 89.

'In their own hills they are a bold and hardy race, industrious as cultivators, and truthful to a proverb; and, though shy and timid with those they do not know, are quickly won over by kindness. They form, indeed, not only one of the most interesting, but one of the most improvable of the aboriginal tribes of India.'—Lucie-Smith's 1869 Chanda Settlement Report, para. 111.

MERCIFULLY the Hill Marias and, to a less extent, the Bison-horn Marias have been spared the attention of the improver, and hitherto have been left fairly free to develop on their own lines and to adjust themselves to the increasing impact of modern India on the surrounding lowlands. The shyness already mentioned is still very marked in the hills, and also among the remoter villages not only of Bison-horn Marias and Koyas, but also of Parjas and Murias. But the ordinary Bison-horn Maria of the open tracts, with the steady expansion of communications and frequent visits by the Chief and the Diwan to the Bailadila hills, has come more and more into contact with the outer world; he often comes into Jagdalpur for Dasehra or market or to work on the public works, or even to show his children the sights of the '*sahar*' or 'city', especially the power-house and the pumps of the new waterworks.

In the Abujhmar hills all is well if visitors are expected. Otherwise, as in Glasfurd's day, all the inhabitants are liable to rush off into the jungle on the sudden appearance of an unusual number of persons or a white man. When marching from Orcha to Adeq (Ader) in Chhota Dongar Mar *pargana* in February 1930, I left the main path to see the village of Tondawada. I was not expected in the village, and though I had with me a number of Maria youths from Orcha well known to several women of Tondawada, yet my approach was the signal for a general *sauve-qui-peut*; the dogs barked, the few cattle were hastily driven off into the hills, and women and boys fled helter-skelter to the hills, even including

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361 The villages being permanent in comparison to the Hill Maria villages, they are apt naturally to be considerably dirtier, and this is 364 accentuated by the far larger numbers of cattle and goats that the ● 177 greater wealth of the Bison-horn Marias enables them to keep. The houses, too, are far dirtier and more smoke-grimed, though in places the Hindu practice of constantly replastering the floors with fresh cow-dung is coming in. They are smaller also, as the spread of cultivation has restricted the available sources of timber and bamboo; but where ample forest is near, the houses are larger, and sleeping sheds for the men as well as cattle byres make individual homesteads appear larger than the homes of the Hill Marias.

342 The long-houses of the Hill Marias are never seen in the Bison-
361 horn Maria villages. Individualism is becoming yearly more marked among the Bison-horn Marias, and every man likes to have his own house and property distinct from his brothers and cousins. Their houses, instead of being parallel to the village street are generally at right angles to it, and a double row of houses, one on each side of the street, is often impossible, because the houses are too close to each other to allow each house to have its *bari* (garden enclosure) behind it, so that some householders (like those of houses B and E in the rough sketch of part of Telam village on page 121) must have their *bari* opposite them across the street. Each [351] *bari* is fenced right round with bamboo wattle-work, so that the fences of the *baris* opposite the line of houses appear like a continuous wattle-work wall along one side of the street. But there may be in the middle of the street occasional granaries or other buildings, and the houses are often irregularly scattered about with no pretence of formal alignment, so that the ordered arrangement of a Hill Maria village is completely absent. There are as many [231] pig-sties in Bison-horn as in Hill Maria villages, but they are far less elaborately and adequately constructed, though protected, like the Hill Maria sties, by leaning thatches from the sun.

361 The houses of the clan that founded the village are usually all together in one group, and there are separate groups for each of the clans with which it intermarries.

343 There appears to be no common menstruation hut among
841 the Bison-horn Marias, nor, indeed, any special menstruation room in their houses. A special hut or booth is erected near the house for the delivery of a child, and in a few villages near the borders of the Hill Maria country there is a hut called the *Piki-kurma* for each group of houses, where apparently young girls are segregated for their first menstruation; but I noted that I might have misunderstood the information that I was given about this hut, and in villages in the heart of the Bison-horn country was definitely told

[text continues on p. 122]

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CHAPTER VII

AGRICULTURE

THE whole life of the Maria is primarily directed towards the raising of food from the earth, either by cultivation, or by gathering the fruits of the forest, or by fishing, hunting or trapping. His agriculture, as we have seen, determines the sites of his villages, and regulates his relations with his wife. His festivals, it will be seen, are designed either to ensure the benevolence of the earth and the ancestors and the clan-god towards the crops about to be sown, or to celebrate the first eating of each of the main crops, and the final harvest-home, in a spirit of communal thanksgiving. The human population to him is the crop of men that the *Bhum* or Earth raises for the clan, or for the Ruling Chief.

The Hill Maria still regards the crops as the result of the combined labours of the village rather than of the labours of individuals. If one suffers, all suffer, and all combine to support the old and the needy, and to help each fellow villager to get through the heaviest parts of the yearly agricultural round. The young man on marriage, or the fellow clansman settling in the village, must have his share of the village lands for cultivation. In the raising of crops, then, the village and not the individual cultivator is the unit, even now, in the Abujhmar hills. But the Bison-horn Maria is an individualist. He has lived long in contact with semi-Hinduized neighbours, and has long begun to practise the more advanced methods of the settled cultivator. Permanent cultivation fosters individualism. Even in the Abujhmar hills the few permanent rice fields are definitely the private property of individuals; and as the use of the plough spreads and more and more of the wet lands become permanent rice fields, the owners of these fields begin more and more to assert in their shifting cultivation plots the rights of permanent private ownership already admitted in their rice fields. This has already happened among the Bison-horn Marias, aided by the rapid growth of population increasing the pressure on the land and reducing the land available for distribution to newcomers to the villages. The indications are that formerly they shared the communal attitude of the Hill Maria. In describing, therefore, the agricultural life of the community, I shall deal primarily with that of the Hill Marias, indicating where necessary the different developments among the Bison-horn Marias.

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perpendicular slopes two or three miles from the village have to be cleared; the wood and scrub spread over the ground, which, in the Bison-horn country, has beforehand been dug over with the hoe or, perhaps, on the lower and less steep slopes, ploughed with great difficulty; field-houses, sheds and watching platforms have to be built on the *penda* slopes. The firing of the *penda* is particularly arduous; the stumps have to be cleared of the shoots that spring up when the rains have set in; and where deer or bison are numerous the clearings have to be fenced with heavy timber fencing. Man and woman here have unaided to do all that regular plains cultivators do with the aid of ox and plough, and much more besides. They do not weed their crops, and they broadcast their seed; here alone they save labour which falls to the regular cultivator, not out of laziness, but from ignorance.

For convenience the names which the Hill Maria gives to the months may here be stated :—

	English	*Maria*
The cultivator's year	December-January	Pusi
	January-February	Mah
	February-March	Phagur
	March-April	Chaita
	April-May	Mur
	May-June	Na
	June-July	Ha'i
	July-August	Hagh
	August-September	Eranj
	September-October	Eram
	October-November	Orna
	November-December	Pa, or Pandi

The Bison-horn Maria uses generally the local Hindu names for the months. The calendar is, of course, lunar, the word *lenj* meaning either moon or month. Of the above names the first four are obvious corruptions of the Hindu names Pus, Magh, Phalgun and Chait. Mur is explained as meaning 'beginning'; 'to begin' is *mur kiyana*. Na is a shortened form of *nalung*, the numeral 4, Ha'i of *ha'ingu* (5), Hagh of *argu* (6), while the other four names are derived from forms akin to the Telugu words for 7, 8, 9 and 10, namely *eru* (7), *ermori* (8), *ormadu* (9) and *padu* (10); it is interesting to note that although ordinarily the Hill Maria, except on the southern edge of the Abujhmar hills, has Gondi forms only for numbers 1 to 6, and after that uses the Hindi numerals, in the nomenclature of the months he remembers Dravidian forms for numbers 7 to 10. He counts the year as beginning in Mur, though some will say Na. (The Bison-horn Maria uses the local Hindu names for the months.) But as the actual round of agricultural operations begins with the felling of trees for the coming *penda*

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servants. Though the Bison-horn Marias are not free from either venereal disease or the visits of these gentry, yet they have been fairly successful in keeping their women to themselves, and have suffered little except in the south, where many of them go at times to Dummagudem and other Madras towns for work. If, however, the Telugus have given them venereal disease, they have more than repaid them with yaws. 164

Skin diseases, such as scabies, ringworm and eczema, are common, especially among Bison-horn Marias and Murias, who under Hindu influence are taking to the use of clothes. They cannot afford a change of clothing, and dispensary treatment is defeated at once if the old infected clothing cannot be discarded. Hill Marias wearing only scanty loin-cloths are far less affected; but even among them the 280 cases treated included 10 of scabies, 9 of ringworm and 7 of eczema. [177]

Eye complaints are frequent, owing largely, no doubt, to the habit of living and sleeping in dark unventilated huts and dormitories thick with smoke. The 280 Hill Maria cases included 16 of conjunctivitis, 5 of cataract, and 5 of other eye complaints.

Malaria is very common among the Bison-horn Marias, and in the Bijapur tahsil blackwater fever occurs. The 280 Hill Maria cases included 26 of malaria, only 4 of which were of children with badly enlarged spleens.

Old men and women are frequently seen crippled with rheumatism, and 17 of the 280 cases were of young men suffering from rheumatic complaints. Of the rest of the 280 cases, 24 were badly neglected ulcers, 6 bad foot-cracks, 25 simple stomach complaints, and 9 (including 3 of pyorrhoea) neuralgia from badly decayed teeth. No figures were kept of what is now the most obviously prevalent complaint, hydrocele, because it was impossible to treat this in camp. Glasfurd noted the prevalence of this in the sixties, and wrote in paragraph 66 of his Report that :—

'Hydrocele . . . is exceedingly common in the Chintulsar and Sucmiram (i.e. Sukma) Talooks, and also around Duntewara and in all parts, indeed, lying adjacent to the Baila Deela range of hills. I should say that from 10 to 20 per cent. of the population in these parts are afflicted in this manner. Their own account of it is that it is caused by drinking the water of nullahs during the freshes.'

To me it now seems commoner in the Hill Maria country than elsewhere. The victims know no cure, and are only beginning to realise that something can be done for it in the dispensaries.

The idea that Marias are expert physicians is an amazing example of the general Hindu ignorance and superstitious dread of the aboriginal. In actual fact the Maria has only a few queer 757 752

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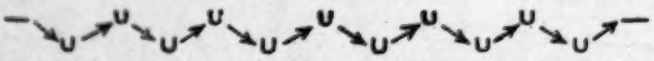
534 attached by criss-cross thongs of the same material to rings of the same material tied round the outside of the bowl in its centre and just above its base. The thongs are passed through holes pierced in the overlap of the membrane with the point of the knife or of an arrow, and pulled taut without anything being done to guard the edge of the membrane from tearing. Occasionally pottery bowls are used instead of *salphi* or *bija* wood, a practice learnt both from [177] the Teluguized Gonds of the south and the northernmost Murias of Antagarh tahsil.

533 The *turam* drum is placed on the ground between the outspread legs of the player, who sits on his buttocks with legs bent at the knee. The drum-sticks are held lightly between the index and middle fingers, the right stick being somewhat larger than the left. [784] It is taboo to beat a *turam* except at Koqsar and weddings, though nowadays most of them regard the taboo as lifted for a dance at a high official's camp. The ordinary rhythm at Koqsar and weddings is :— .



The rhythm thus begins and ends on a long beat with the right hand, with six short left hand and five short right hand beats alternately in between.

534 I saw once at Nugur a small drum of the *turam* shape made with a hollow gourd bowl.

When it is taboo to use the *turam* drums, boys use what are called by them *pak-dol* or *veddur-dol*, literally 'bamboo-drums', which are really split-stringed instruments. They are made of two-foot lengths of the thick bamboo called *noli-veddur* by the Marias, or *bendri-bans* in Halbi. The outer rind of the bamboo is prised apart from the rest of the bamboo for a length of about eighteen inches, three inches being left joined at each end. The prised rind is about one-eighth of an inch thick and an inch and a half wide. It is raised from the body of the bamboo by two small bridges (*barga*) of bamboo inserted at each end as near its junctions with the body of the bamboo as possible, and is made into three 'strings' by two longitudinal cuts. The drum is laid on the ground and rubbed firmly into position in the dust, and dust is poured along its sides; the 'strings' are then struck with light drum-sticks in the same way as the *turam*. The Bison-horn Marias do not make this.

Brass dish-shaped gongs (*gatta*) struck with sticks used, till a few years ago, to be an indispensable part of the bride-price or

1 [See cat. 116, pp. 421-422, - Analysis]

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372 his ***kanda*** by the sharp edge between their hands across the split in the ' hearth ' and at right angles to the ' hearth ', rapidly increasing the speed of his sawing; this friction soon engenders smoke and a spark, which falls through the ' hearth ' on to the little heap of inflammable bamboo sawdust that has fallen with the sawing on to the dead leaves or rag. Sawing is at once stopped, and the ' hearth ' lifted off the sawdust with great care by the kneeling men, who gently blow on the spark till it spreads and kindles the sawdust, when they fold the leaves carefully over sawdust and sparks and take the packet off to the place where a fire is to be lit, kindling first heaps of dry grass, and with this small sticks and finally logs. They are very quick in the process. I introduced a race in the tribal sports at the Maharani Sahiba's Dasehra celebrations, in which teams of three had to run fifty yards, make fire, and run with it another fifty yards to kindle a bonfire; and Hill Maria teams invariably won; the timing of the whole process, from the start till the bonfire was well alight, was eighty-seven seconds. In the [177] Muria and some Bison-horn Maria tracts the use of matches is coming in.

There appears to be no ritual occasion on which fire has to be kindled in this way. The first pile of dry wood at the firing of the [176] ***penda*** fields, and the fires for cooking sacrificial meals, are kindled from a burning log brought from the Hearth of the Departed in the *kasyeq-gaita's* or *perma's* house.

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perma with three or four mediums officiating at the former, and the priest of Mata (*Mata-pujari*) at the latter. In some villages there is a separate hut close to the shrine (*pen-rawar*) of the log-god or clan-god and to the *Mataguri*, and a separate priest of the Departed called generally *Pitar-gaita*, but sometimes *Dhuma-gaita* or *Hanal-gaita*, the use of the Hindu term *pitar* for the local terms *dhuma* and *hanal* being significant of the way in which Hinduism is gradually modifying tribal religion. At the Ghotpal Kurum Pandum, for example, on the 9th September 1930, the men assembled with the *perma* outside the *pen-rawar* of Use Modia Pen along with the men of two adjacent Lekami villages. The *pen* log-god was brought out and set down on four stone slabs set up as posts. The proceedings started with the *Pitar-gaita* bringing two new earthen pots and about half a pound each of new *chikma* and new mountain rice to a separate shed at the side of the *pen-rawar*. He kindled a fire, and in one pot cooked small quantities of the new *chikma*, set this out on three *mahua* leaves as an offering to the Departed, and attached a fringe of rice plants in ear to the roof of the shed. He then started to cook the rest of the new *chikma* and new rice in the other pot, sitting in the shed, while the others present went to attend the sacrifices in front of the log-god. These were conducted in much the same way as those already described as made usually before the Village Mother; but there was no sprinkling of blood on *saja* leaves or burial of the leaves in the fields, the *perma*, who acted as clan-priest, washed the mouths and feet of the pigs and cocks before applying the *tohana* test, and a *wadde* medium sat by the side of the log-god reciting '*mantram*' as the *perma* sacrificed each cock and pig. The *perma* then poured three libations each of *mahua* spirit and *landa* in front of the log-god. All the men then returned to the *Pitar-gaita's* shed, and sat in a circle round it, while the *Pitar-gaita* stuck a pinch of the cooked *chikma* and rice on the centre of each man's forehead, just as Hindus apply the *tika*. Thereafter all went back to the *pen-rawar*, and first the *perma*, then the *Pitar-gaita*, then the *pada* headmen of the three villages taking part in the ceremony, and last eleven or twelve village elders saluted everyone present and drank a leaf-cupful first of *mahua* spirit and then of *landa*. Then the sacrificed cocks and pigs were cooked, and all the men sat in a circle and were given each two leaf-cupfuls of *landa* to drink and two pieces of the cooked meat. All ended by drinking some *mahua* spirit and the whole feast was over by 9 p.m., when they dispersed to their houses without dancing. No females had been present. They had the usual family new-eating next day, with offerings to the Departed inside the house. Ghotpal and some other villages have no dancing at this *pandum*.

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Jatra, which is held generally about the full moon of Magh, but in some villages is part of the round of festivities and hunting connected with the Wijja Pandum in the month of Chait. The Mandai is a Hinduization of the old Pen-karsita. Throughout Northern Bastar a Mandai Jatra is held at all big centres at about this time, culminating in the great Mandai in the open space called Kodo Bhata in Jagdalpur, which the Chief should attend in state, processing on elephant seven times round the fair, accompanied by innumerable mediums leaping and dancing possessed by their gods. The Hill Maria counterpart is the Koqsar on the day after the Pupal Korta Tindana. The Bison-horn Pen-karsita tends to resemble the Mandai of the bigger villages of the north, all the local gods being brought out and the *waddi* mediums, possessed by their godlings, leaping and dancing wildly about. The special Pen-karsita drum rhythm and dance have already been referred to.

The Mandai

These are the main festivals, though here and there there are further *pandum*, such as the sacrifice offered at the base of the first toddy-palm to be tapped among the southern Bison-horn Marias. Nor must it be expected that in every *pargana* or village the local *pandum* will conform exactly to the descriptions in this chapter, which represent the principal features of *pandum* actually seen in Dugeli, villages around Kuakonda, Aranpur, Ghotpal and villages in Sukma zamindari. The festivals are far more numerous and more elaborate than those of the Hill Marias. It is an obvious suggestion that if the Bison-horn Maria tradition of migration from the Abujhmar hills be correct, the accretions to the hill cults represent entirely the influence of the old Telanga Hindu centres of Dantewara, Barsur and Bhairamgarh. But this does not account for such features as the soaking of the first seeds to be sown in the coming harvest in the blood of the animals sacrificed in the Wijja Pandum, or the burial of the blood-stained *saja* leaves in the fields during the Kurum Pandum, which have suggestions of connexion with the Khond Meriah ritual; or for such magico-religious pieces of ritual as the gathering of *mahua* leaves in the baskets used for collecting *mahua* flowers, the dancing of the *perma's* wife with an empty *landa* pot on her head, or the spilling of milk on the *mahua* buds. Primitive cults are influenced by Hinduism, but also react on it; and it seems to have been part of the policy of the Bastar Chiefs to identify themselves as much as they could with the religious life of their primitive subjects, save those in the inaccessible Abujhmar hills. Much of the long Dasehra ritual at Jagdalpur is elaborated from primitive ideas. Tribal gods have been recognized, and many are allowed to join in the Mandai

Conclusion

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procession at Jagdalpur. The Dantewara temple observes several of the local *pandum*, if in a Hinduized form, while the ceremonies of the isolated Telanga villages now surrounded by a sea of Bison-horn Maria villages have become little different from those of the Bison-horn Marias. Hinduization there is, and has long been; but that alone does not account for the differences between the ritual of the Bison-horn Maria and that of the Hill Maria and his Muria neighbours. The physical differences between the two sections of Marias are slight, but their traditions are different, and at least it is clear that they represent different waves of migration. The remarkable differences of dancing, drumming, singing and ritual, and in the intonation, words and inflexions of their dialects, which make them mutually unintelligible, cannot be explained merely by saying that the Bison-horn Marias are 'more advanced' and more in contact with Hinduism and Telugu influences than the Hill Marias.

Note.

Mr. E. S. Hyde, I.C.S., has, since this book went to the press, kindly sent me a note of an interesting recent investigation by the police at Madder in Bhopalpatnam zamindari. A Mohammedan woman asleep on the night of June 13th, 1937 in her courtyard was slightly wounded with a knife or arrow over her right ribs, and woke to see what she believed to be two Marias running away. The police enquiry elicited information that many Marias in Kutru zamindari (i.e. Bison-horn Marias or Hill Marias of the plains in long contact with Dorla or Bison-horn influence; the true Hill Marias would not venture down to Madder), before sowing try to get some human blood, especially of women, to mix with their seed. Their usual method is to go to distant villages by night and inflict slight wounds on sleeping women with a knife or arrow. They then take the blood-stained weapon home, and wash it with water, in which they steep their rice seed before sowing, confident of securing thereby a bumper crop. Before wounding their victim they offer near her cot a little rice and turmeric; such an offering was found near the Madder woman's cot.

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who would perhaps punish evil-doers somewhere after death; but no one could say who or where Ispural was, or where the sinful would be judged and punished. It is possibly a faint echo of missionary teaching passed on by bazaar gossip. All Marias agree that the dead are somewhere underground; men, animals, trees, and perhaps rivers and streams have in them *jiwa*, a principal of life, and some say that when a man dies his *jiwa* goes to Pogho Bhum, the sky, while that part which is cremated or buried goes below the earth and is his *hanal*. There is a belief that the menhirs erected at the *kotohal* or *urashal* increase in size if the *hanal* commemorated by it is happy.[1] There are traces of an embryo belief in reincarnation in the practice among Hill Marias of examining a new-born baby to see if it has the same birth-marks as a dead ancestor and, if so, of naming it after the ancestor if of the same sex, or his spouse if of the other sex.[2] Hindu ideas are beginning to influence Bison-horn Marias; tombs are erected sometimes by the side of the menhir in the *urashal*, thatched over to protect the dead from the heat of the sun, and with a pot of cold water, replenished from time to time, hung over the memorial to drip through a small hole in the pot to cool him further. But, like their ideas about the earth and the gods, the Marias' ideas about the Departed and the after-life are very indefinite and vary from place to place; it is safe only to go on their actual practice, and not on what some of them will say by way of generalization or theory; the latter are certain to be those who have had most contact with the outer world and persons of other faiths. There is one practical way in which old Bison-horn men show their belief in some future existence. They often choose before death the cow or bullock to be sacrificed when their menhir is erected in the *urashal*; and it is alleged that if the heir thinks it better to slay some other animal, the animal chosen by the dead man always pines to death. The graves of Hill and Bison-horn Marias are adorned with strips of cloth, spears, fishing-rods and other things they may need hereafter, and their ornaments are buried often with them.

B. Magic and Witchcraft

We have seen before that such is the ignorance of the local Hindus about the Marias that, in the words used by Glasfurd in 1862,[1] 'the simple and unsophisticated Gond tribes are believed to be expert necromancers, and on the most intimate footing with evil spirits'; and that the Marias have a totally undeserved reputation as physicians, although their general idea of sickness

[1] Report, p. 32.

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787 825 584 be postponed for a week or two, not that the proposed match should be dropped.

D. Beliefs about Natural Phenomena

821 To the Hill Maria the universe is *Bhum*, the sky being *Pogho-bhum*, and the earth *Adi-bhum*; they have no name for any under-world or home of the Departed. They sometimes say that they have heard of a god named Ispural living in *Pogho-bhum*, but that they do not worship him. To Hill and Bison-horn Maria the sun (*porad*) is a Koitor, the moon (*lenj*) his woman, and the stars (*hukom* or *minkos*, Hill Maria; *uk'ka*, Bison-horn Maria) are their children; [761] falling stars (*Sohra*, Hill Maria) are their excrement; the Bison-horn Marias consider that falling stars are a portent of death. Both Hill and Bison-horn Marias call the Milky Way the Road (*daghar*, Hill Maria; *marg*, Bison-horn), but they do not know who or what uses the road and have no legend about it, though the Bhattras and Murias of Jagdalpur say that it is the road over which Bhimul drives his bullock-cart, the thunder being the rumbling of the wheels. The only constellations for which I could get Hill Maria names were *Nagar* or Plough for Orion and *Khatoli* or Cot for the Great Bear; enquiries on this point among the Bison-horn Marias drew blank. Neither had any theory about the markings on the moon's face; the Hill Marias have observed that they sometimes look like a human face. The Hill Marias call the rainbow the Earth-serpent (*Bhum-taras*, or *Bhum-taras-korta*), and say that it crawls out of a great ant-hill and throws its light across the sky as a sign of no more rain: the Bison-horn Marias call it *Bhimul-wil*, the bow of Bhimul the rain-god. The Hill Marias associate clouds (*mayyal*) with rain (*pegh*), but do not know where the rain comes from. Thunder (*gadar*) and lightning (*orr*) just happen, and do not alarm them, nor do they appear to have any special precautions to take in burying a man killed by lightning, unlike the Bison-horn Maria. But hail (*adur*) terrifies them, and all rush into their houses. They have no explanation of eclipses, which they call *garhar*, an obvious corruption of the Hindi *grahan*; but the idiomatic way of saying 'there is an eclipse' is '*garhar lopinta*', literally 'the eclipse is swallowing'; and both they and Bison-horn Marias call a man with [846 177] a hare-lip '*garhar-handya*', an expression which they themselves cannot explain and is borrowed direct from their Hindu neighbours, who always attribute a hare-lip to an eclipse during the mother's pregnancy.

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585 this supper both parties assemble in front of the bride's house, the men and youths in dancing-dress, and there is dancing and singing till dawn, all men, women, youths and girls present being free to take part, whether married or single, old or young. Soon after dawn the pig, grain and liquor brought by the bridegroom's parents as part of the bride-price are divided into a portion for the bride's village and a portion for the visiting village, cooked and partaken of by all present; any deficiency is made up by the girl's parents, this being their only expense; they do not even decorate their house or put up booths for the guests.

This wedding breakfast over, the bride is brought out by her parents and made over to the bridegroom's parents. She is not washed or given special clothes, though if funds permit she sometimes gets a new loin-cloth. She is expected to weep profusely in token of reluctance to leave her father's home. The bridegroom's parents take her on foot through the forest to their village, arriving always in the evening. The bridegroom stays in his house; to go out to meet the bride would be immodest. She is escorted to his house, thrust inside, and the marriage is thus completed without further ceremony. There is no present from the bridegroom to the bride, not even a ring as among the Bison-horn Marias. Supper that night is cooked for the couple by the bridegroom's mother.

582 177 Pre-puberty marriage never occurs among the Hill Marias, who look upon it as an utterly abhorrent custom of the Kosor or Hindus. Unfortunately a few Bison-horn Marias are beginning to ape their Hindu neighbours in this as in other matters; but even now probably only three in a hundred Bison-horn marriages are child marriages.

Child marriage

583 It is very common for the bridegroom to serve his future father-in-law for his bride instead of paying the bride-price. If at the second *talq-da'ina* his parents have to admit to the girl's parents that they cannot afford the bride-price, it is arranged for the bridegroom to go as *lamana'i* or suitor-servant to the girl's parents for a term of years that varies from three years to seven or eight, though when the term exceeds three years the girl usually becomes the *lamana'i's* wife for the last two years. For the first part of his service the *lamana'i* is not supposed to have intercourse with the girl, but, provided that the girl agrees (and she is seldom reluctant), he generally does so after a time. It is, however, considered a disgrace to her parents if in consequence she becomes pregnant, and they are fined a pig, which is eaten by all their and the *lamana'i's* clansmen, after which the girl is regarded as the *lamana'i's* wife. Often at the end of the agreed period of service the father-in-law is unwilling

Serving for a wife

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553 Yete Mura, the headman of Hoinar, was born hare-lipped and was therefore named after his hare-lipped paternal grandfather; and Jugho Dallu, the headman of Hitulnar, recognized on his son the birth-marks of his dead mother Pora'i and therefore gave him the name of her dead husband Dugha. This practice is a sign of some sort of belief in the reincarnation of the Departed. The second exception is the practice of giving a name immediately after birth when birth has coincided with some natural phenomenon or incident. Usendi Ippo of Orcha was called Ippo because born when the *mahua* tree (*ippa marra* in Maria) was in flower; Usendi Irka was born when the cucumbers (*irka*) were ripening in the *penda* fields; Usendi Ghasi was so named because, just before he was born, a *patwari* rode into Orcha and ordered his father Moda to go and cut grass (*ghas* in Halbi) for his pony. Oyami Gursha, headman of Komu, was born when his father and uncles were making a wicker-work bin (*gursha*) for storing grain. Yete Mura named his daughter Reko because she was born when the *reka marra* tree (*Aegle marmelos*) was in fruit. The third exception, which, like the first, indicates some belief, if not in reincarnation, at least in a previous existence, is the practice when a new-born baby cries loudly for three or four days of reciting to it all the names that the parents can remember and giving it the last name uttered before it stops crying, on the theory that it has stopped crying on recognizing its name. Normally, however, the name is not given till the child is two or three, and then depends on such things as whether it is fat or thin, slow or smart, learnt to walk or speak quickly, and so on. Thus a boy was named Morlel or 'hare' because he used to double suddenly like a hare when running about the village; Bunge is a name given to a boy with a huge stomach; Baiyya or 'mad' to a harum-scarum boy; Banga to a shy, untalkative child; and U'ile or 'thin' to a child thin through much illness in his early years.

[775]

551 177 Russell and Hiralal state (III, p. 87) of the Gond race as a whole that names derived from the Gondi language are rare or non-existent and, on this assumption, actually suggest that perhaps the Gonds had not advanced to the stage of having individual names before they came into contact with the Hindus! This is certainly not true of either Hill or Bison-horn Marias. Of 103 male and 38 female Hill Maria names collected from 215 men and 107 women, and 103 male and 23 female Bison-horn Maria names collected from 236 men and 68 women, very few, not 5 per cent., were Hindu, the proportion of Hindu names being, as might be expected, slightly higher among the Bison-horn Marias. Only about 27 per cent. of the Hill Maria men's names and 8 per cent. of their women's names occur also, in the same or a modified form, in the lists of Bison-horn

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Maria names, though, of course, very few Bison-horn women's names were collected. A noticeable difference is the absence from the Hill Maria of names given according to the day of the week on which the person named was born, such as Budhi (Wednesday), Mangru (Tuesday) and Lakhmu (Thursday); it has already been noted that the Hill Marias have no names for the days of the week. 551 177

Weaning

A child is breast-fed until it can both walk and take its own food by hand, sometimes as long as three years. Unlike the Bison-horn Marias, the Hill Marias have no weaning ceremony. 862

Education

There is no system of training Hill Maria children corresponding to the *Gotul* or *Dormitory system of the Murias, except in the* northernmost Hill Maria *parganas* of Padalbhum and Nurbhum. In the greater part of the Maria country, children learn simply by accompanying and imitating their parents and the elder boys of the village. At night the boys who are old enough to leave their mothers sleep in the communal dormitory, and in the evenings they sit outside the dormitory round the fire with the men of the village. When the corn is ripening and the men sleep in the field-houses, in many villages the dormitory is closed, and the boys sleep with their fathers or elder brothers in the fields. Thus from his earliest days the child learns the routine of village and tribal life from constant association with his elders. He is made to do his share of the field work, and taught the use of the bow and arrow and the setting of snares. Children of six and seven of both sexes join in the village and clan dances, very quickly mastering the steps. We have seen how they use bamboo *pak-dol* drums to master the rhythm of drumming. In the ordinary hill village there is nothing corresponding to the Muria custom of the dormitory owning and cultivating a field or fields and applying the proceeds either to dormitory feasts or to the purchase of beads; but in the Barsur Mar villages and, therefore, probably elsewhere in the Abujhmar hills fathers encourage children to keep their own pigs, which they sometimes sell to procure money or grain for buying beads and knives. Girls similarly soon learn domestic routine from their constant association with their mothers. They cannot associate with boys in the manner of the Murias, among whom every girl must attend the boys' dormitory every night and has her own *gotul* 'boy-friend' to serve, since these *gotul* unions must be between couples who could legitimately marry under the rules of exogamy, and in nearly all Hill Maria villages all the boys and girls are of the same clan and therefore kindred. Yet the girls make bead fillets, ear-tassels and necklaces for the boys, and the latter carve wooden combs for the girls. 861

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861 The complete *gotul* organization is a feature of Muria and not of Hill Maria culture. But as it has extended to Padalibhum and Nurbhum (possibly also to parts of Tapalibhum and Behra Mar) among the Hill Marias, a brief account of its salient features will not be out of place; it may be expected to spread into the hills with the gradual improvement of communications. A fairly full account from my notes on the Murias has been printed in the *Census of India* 1931 *Report*, Vol. I, Part III B., pp. 81-3. It may be added that it is easier for the Marias of Padalbhum to copy their Muria neighbours because Padalibhum not only has two or three villages which are not Padali villages but belong to the Nuroti and Usendi clans, but even in Padali villages has settlers of these two clans, which are *akomama* (wife-clan) to them.

[858] Boys and girls of an age to visit the *gotul* dormitories are known as *leyur* and *leyas* respectively. All the boys assemble at the 857 dormitory in the evening for dancing, games and social and sexual 571 training, sleeping on there after the departure of the girls to their homes late in the night. The girls attend at the dormitory in the 864 evening, each girl being paired off with a boy of an *akomama* clan. The girls have to comb their boys' hair and massage their arms and legs, to dance with them, and to be initiated into the mysteries of sex with them. Marriage frequently follows these dormitory unions, but by no means always does. Children are expected to attend the dormitory from the age of eleven or twelve, and the parents may be fined for not sending them. Every boy and girl has a special dormitory name or rank; the smaller children have designations which are little more than names, but those of the elder boys change as they are promoted, and involve special duties. The Hill Marias seem to have adopted the ranks for the boys only, the girls retaining the name given them on their entry until they leave the dormitory organization on marriage, but taking among their fellows the precedence of their boy-mates in the dormitory. In Padalibhum the head boy of the dormitory is always known as [171] the *leyur-gaita*, and below him the *gotul* officials are the *leyur-majhi*, the *silledar*, the *jaliarsi*, the *laharu*, the *baiddar* and the *kamdar*; of these, *silledar*, *baiddar* and *kamdar* are Hindi terms copied from the titles of State or zamindari servants; in many a Muria dormitory all the office-holders have such designations instead of the old native names. Besides these names or designations to which [557] special duties and privileges are attached, they have for the boys the names Jalka, Jolsai and Joria, and probably others. The girls' dormitory names ascertained were Jaliaru, Lahari, Manjaro, Nirosa, Jhalo, Gujaro, Piyosa and Belosa. At a camp at Partabpur attended by Hill Marias from Padalibhum, the *leyur-gaita* of three

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for some time with a series of one long followed by two short beats to announce that a death has occurred in the house; he then climbs down, and continues this drumming on the ground until the relatives and friends of the dead man assemble, or until the body is taken out to be cremated. Sometimes they fire guns at intervals for the same purpose. Messengers are sent out to neighbouring villages to bid relatives to the funeral.

When all the men and women have assembled the body is taken out of the house and washed with a pot of water and anointed with a mixture of ground turmeric and oil. They then spread a cloth on a bier of bamboo wicker-work, lay the body on it, and spread a cloth over it. Each male relative who can afford it brings a cloth and similarly spreads it over the body. Four men then carry the bier on their shoulders to the cremation ground, followed by all the mourners, and men beating the dactylic funeral drum-beat. The pyre is made there, the body laid on it with head to the east and feet to the west, and covered over with fuel. Two men, generally two sons, or two sons-in-law, or a son and a son-in-law, then kindle the pyre at the head and the feet of the body respectively. As soon as the pyre is blazing fiercely the company leaves the cremation ground and returns to the dead man's house for food. The cremation ground is almost always on the side of the path or road opposite to the row of menhirs erected to commemorate the dead, which is known to the Bison-horn Marias as *wraskal*.

On the next day all go to the cremation ground to see whether the body has been completely reduced to ashes; if any portion remains unburnt, it is a sign that the death was due to the magic of some enemy. All condole with the members of the bereaved family and return to their houses.

On the next Saturday morning comes the erection of the *wraskal* menhir. There are *wraskal* with great numbers of menhirs almost everywhere in the Bison-horn country, and in most parts villagers continue to erect them for men, women and children whenever a death occurs. On the Jagdalpur side, however, and around Paknar, though every village has its *wraskal*, new menhirs are seldom set up in these days, the reason given being always that the ceremony is too expensive. It is indeed expensive, for if properly done it involves the killing of at least one, and possibly two cows, a pig or two, and the provision of three or four *khandi* of grain—*kutki*, *wad*, *mung* and rice—and an adequate supply of *mahua* spirit and *landa*. But expense is not taken into account at weddings, where open house is kept for a thousand guests if need be. The real reason is that these Bison-horn Marias are in close contact with Hinduism with its veneration of the cow; and as they raise

[See cat. 116, p. 426, — Analyst]

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themselves socially they not only cease to follow old Maria customs, but begin to resent being called Marias and to claim the designation of Muria. In some places, especially in villages where it is hard to find suitable menhir stones, they erect in their stead posts of *saja* wood, which they call *wrazgatta*. The upper illustration on plate XXI shows a very elaborate *wrazgatta* from a roadside village near the Chitrakot falls, on the northernmost fringe of the Bison-horn country. It is carved on each of its carefully squared sides with representations of hunting scenes, and the objects of the chase. Originally these were picked out in red and blue paint. Plate XXII shows part of a large row of *wraskal* menhirs by the side of the road from Dantewara to Kameli, at the foot of the bridle-path ascending to the Bailadila guest-house; such enormous menhirs as those shown behind the women in this illustration are seldom set up in these days; the tallest shown was thirteen feet high, and the broadest over six feet wide at the base. The normal size of those nowadays erected is shown in the lower illustration on plate XXI; this portrays part of the *wraskal* of Aranpur village, by the side of the forest road from Kuakonda to Dummagudem, and at the head of the Aranpur pass. In this photograph the interesting thing is the large flat stone resting on four boulders. This is known as a *dawya-kal*, and was placed there as the memorial of Birya-Marvi Hurra Wadde, who in his life-time was *parma* and *bhum-gaita* of Aranpur, as well as a *wadde*. The Birya-Marvi and the Kuhrami clans are the only two which always make *dawyakal* and never set up *wraskal* stones; all the other clans, even in the Marvi and Kuhrami phratries, and including the small or Chudala Marvi clan, erect *wraskal* stones. This Aranpur *wraskal* was not restricted to the Birya-Marvi clan, although the village was founded by that clan; the *dawyakal* stone on the right edge of the photograph was the last stone at the south end of the row; next to it on the north were fifteen *wraskal* stones of the Kunjami clan, and after them three of the Chudala Marvi clan. The small stones at the foot of the menhirs are known as *kawal-kutul* or ghost stools, and serve the same function as the *kawal-garya* cromlechs of the Hill Marias. Any recently erected stone can usually be detected either by the presence of a cow's or pig's tail hung over its apex by a loop of cord, or by the dirty white stains of libations of *lauda* poured over the stone when it was set up.

The stone is selected and carried from the quarry to the place where it is to be erected in much the same way as that already described for the Hill Marias. I use the word quarry advisedly, for these great slabs or pillars cannot be found as surface boulders. I have not seen the actual quarrying; but they understand how to

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
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841 or fowls. She must not take grain from the bins or approach the Hearth of the Departed. Except at the menarche, however, she may fetch wood and leaves which may be used by other members of the household; she may fish so long as it is not in a pond; she may even dance so long as it is not at a Penkarsita and she does not touch any man.

When I was taking photographs in Maria villages I frequently came up against these taboos. At Mokhpal I was unable to photograph a girl with strikingly Mongolian features because she was in her period—the people seemed genuinely afraid that the menstrual exhalations would break the lens. At Tikanpal, where I wanted to stage a group of girls making leaf-cups, I was not permitted to do so because one of them was in her period and must not sit on a mat. At Doriras a married girl refused to be photographed standing in front of the girls' dormitory because menstruating women were accustomed to sleep there.

During a wife's period a husband is subject to the laws of a 'little couvade'. No one will eat from his hands; no one will accept tobacco from his pouch. He must not cook or fetch water. He too must not go to the grain bins or approach the symbols of the Departed. He may go to a shrine, but he must not enter it; he may cut his clearing, but he must not fire it or sow seed. He may not hunt, carry a *kawar*-pole, climb a tree, cut grass or reap a crop. If he is a Perma or Gaita he may not perform any religious rite, and if he is a Gunia he cannot divine the cause of sickness.

842 It is generally believed by the Marias, as by the rest of India, that a woman is most likely to conceive if she has intercourse on the day she has her ceremonial bath at the close of the period.

836 As by other aboriginals the climacteric is accepted by the Marias as a matter of course. 'As it appears, so it disappears.' If an elderly woman or her husband dreams of a dried-up tank or stream, it means that this crisis is approaching.

V

843 Pregnancy is diagnosed by the cessation of the menses, vomiting, swelling of the breasts and a darkening of the nipples. 'The face dries a little.' It is generally supposed that a boy is more exacting and makes the mother look fragile and exhausted, while a girl keeps her fresh and well.

843 177 During pregnancy, Bison-horn Maria taboos are not exacting and my suspicion is that originally they were as few and as casual as those of the Hill Maria, and that any elaboration is due to the influence of the local Hindus who, on the whole, pay more attention to the pregnancy than to the menstrual taboos. In other words,

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
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Hinduization weakens the taboo on the menstruating and strengthens that on the pregnant woman. It was at Gudra, which stands on a motor-road, that I heard most about restrictions during pregnancy. The pregnant woman in that village was not allowed to cross a stream or the rope with which a horse was tethered; she could not pick or reap any growing thing; if she plastered a wall, she must leave a small hole somewhere. She must not eat the head or legs of a sacrificed animal.[1] Eclipses are dangerous; if a woman goes out of doors at such a time there is danger that her child may be born with a hare-lip or a squint. It is sometimes held that a pregnant woman should not go to the forest clearings; at Barem the daughter of Barse Chule did so; she met a Rau in a whirlwind and was prematurely delivered of a stillborn child.

The cravings of pregnancy are believed, as elsewhere in India, to be due to the erratic and uncertain desires of the child in the womb, but whereas there is usually a belief that it is essential to gratify these cravings I found some Bison-horn Marias of opinion that to do so was dangerous. 'If she eats earth, she will die; if she craves for fish and gets it, she will die.' But at Gudra they took the conventional view and held it was more dangerous to deny the cravings than to fulfil them. Long ago, I was told, a woman wanted a plantain and could not get it; the child was born with a plantain in its hand. Another woman demanded buttermilk and when her request was denied, her hands and feet swelled.

Birth normally occurs on the fenced-in veranda of a Bison-horn Maria house, in the place where the menstruating woman has to sleep. Any variation from the normal is considered dangerous; a foot-presentation, for example, is expected to prove fatal to both child and mother. For the cord to be discovered round the shoulder is a good omen and prophesies wealth; but a strangulating cord suggests that the child will be hanged and a cord round the leg is also bad. The cord is cut with an arrow-head if the child is a boy, with a knife or sickle if it is a girl. The mother herself or some old woman of the household makes a ligature and severs the cord below it. Meanwhile the husband erects in the compound a small 'bathing-hut', a simple unroofed structure of leafy branches, inside which he digs a pit. Then the mother herself, or her attendant, puts the placenta and cord on a leaf-platter of *bauhinia vahlii* leaves[2] and places it in the pit. The father fills the pit with earth and places three green logs and sometimes a large stone or wooden

[1] I have been told that no woman should at any time eat part of an animal sacrificed to Bhimsul or Dongar Pen.

[2] This platter, which is chosen at random from a pile, is carefully examined, for the number of children the mother may expect is estimated from the number of bamboo stitches holding it together.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

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These pillars are usually erected near a highway—not necessarily a motorable one. They are usually made of the wood of *terminalia tomentosa* or *shorea robusta* and are erected with ceremonies similar to those used for a menhir. 764 [824]

As far as I know, the pillars are always made by non-aboriginals, but since the Marias give their instructions to the carpenters about the patterns they want carved, they do thus throw some light on Maria psychology even if they do not illustrate their sense of art. For example, the pillar in memory of Kopa Dhurwa at Massenar was made by Bharto, an Oriya carpenter of Jagdalpur. The pillars for Barse Marka at Barrem and for Marvi Masa at Jabeli were both made by Anda Kalar of Potali. For Barse Marka's pillar his sister's son gave a bull calf worth twenty rupees, cloth worth five rupees, two rupees in cash and daily rations for the fifteen days while the carpenter was working. 764 532 [435]

There was a fine pillar to a wealthy Maria named Muchaki Hunga near Dilmilli on the main road from Jagdalpur to Dantewara. It is a fat, thick pillar, carefully squared, standing some fifteen feet high with elaborate carvings round the base and a decoration of crocodiles and pigeons at the top. The whole is surmounted by a trident, obviously suggested by the carpenter, and on this again is a small bird. On the west face of the pillar there are carvings of dancers wearing bison horns and six girls who are realistically portrayed with breasts and genitalia. Below them is a tiger, a crane and a peacock. On the south side is a picture of the dead man riding an elephant, an umbrella in his hand and bags of money at the saddle. Five women follow him with pots of rice-beer and spoons. Below them are rats. At the foot are men ploughing, deer and tigers. On the east side is a man riding a horse and fish, horses and a tortoise. To the north is a man and wife with their children, a gourd for taking beer from a pot and representations of snakes and birds. Below this are two pairs of dogs apparently copulating, and at the very bottom some men are carrying a pot of rice-beer.

Near the pillar is a grave built up in the modern Hinduized fashion and protected by a little shed. [177]

Near Massenar, at the end of a long row of *wasikal* menhirs is the pillar in memory of the famous Kopa Dhurwa. This is much more slender than the one at Dilmilli and is not so well carved. But it has carvings of Kopa himself on his elephant with the inevitable umbrella, a gun and a tobacco pouch. On his chest is a small circle which I was told represented his Jubilee Medal. The pillar is further decorated with carvings of men dancing with the bison-horn head-dress, boys and girls dancing with a pot of rice-beer, a man trying to drag away a girl by the hand, crocodiles,

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
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It is remarkable, to contrast the effect on the tribal population 565
of Ahiri of two influences, that of the zamindar and his administra- 177
tion at Ahiri and that of the Allapilli forest depot. The zamindar as a practising Raj-Gond, related both to the former royal house of Chanda and to the neighbouring zamindari families of Kutru and Bhopalpatnam in Bastar State, might be expected to be in some sense a focus or rallying point of tribal culture. But he and his relatives and agents (so far as the latter are Gond) are representatives of what Verrier Elwin describes as culturally the fourth class of aboriginals, the old aristocracy of the country who 'retain the old tribal name and their clan and totem rules and observe elements of tribal religion though they generally adopt the full Hindu faith and live in modern and even in European style'. He adds that the members of this fourth class may be said to have won the battle of culture-contact, since 'aristocratic tradition, economic stability or affluence, outside encouragement, a certain arrogance and self-confidence characteristic alike of ancient families and modern enterprise, have enabled them to assimilate the blessings of civilization without injury to themselves'; but he wisely reminds us that 'such educated progressive persons are not necessarily, simply because they are of aboriginal stock, the best qualified to represent their poorer brethren, of whose needs they often have only an elementary knowledge'.[1] The zamindar of Ahiri at least on the economic side has done much to preserve his tribal ryots from the evil effects of such sudden contacts as have reduced to 'despair and degradation' Elwin's third class of aboriginals, 'those who under the influence of external contact have begun to lose their hold on tribal culture, religion and social organization'.[2] He has accordingly himself been active in efforts to save his people from alien money-lenders, and was, for example, an active and valuable member of a voluntary debt conciliation board that worked in Sironcha tahsil in 1935-6.[3] Yet the fact that Ahiri, as the headquarters of the estate administration, especially when the estate has been under the Court of Wards, has become a centre of the modern way of life, has brought to Ahiri and Allapilli and all the adjacent villages a steady influx of outsiders, mostly Hindu, as officials, contractors, cloth and salt dealers, money-lenders and cultivators. The Dasehra festival, attended by ryots from all villagers coming to honour the zamindar as their Raja, has accustomed even remote Maria villagers to certain fundamental Hindu ideas. The Court of Wards administration has proceeded on its ruthless, standardized lines, to impose on the

[1] The quotations are from *The Aboriginals* (Oxford Pamphlet on India Affairs, No. 14, Bombay, 1943), pp. 10-11.
[2] Ibidem, p. 10.
[3] *The Aboriginal Problem*, pp. 283-6.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
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565 177 tribes controls and practices[1] evolved in non-tribal areas. Culturally therefore on the whole the zamindari administration has had a detribalizing influence. Economically by encouraging the opening up of the country and the settlement of outsiders it has led to economic exploitation of the Marias by money-lenders, village watchmen, and forest contractors.

655 466 166 The Allapilli forest depot on the other hand, with its sawmills attracting a constant stream of Marias as seasonal labourers, cartmen, etc., and with all its operations conducted departmentally by the Forest Service, has saved the aboriginals from exploitation by forest contractors and money-lenders. It has helped tribesmen to pass through the early stages of the difficult transition from an economy in kind to a cash economy. Rent and land revenue have to be paid in cash, salt and cloth to be bought for cash. Remote

622 791 [1] For example, the suppression of *podu* cultivation, or the deliberate curbing of the traditional influence of the religious and secular headmen, the *bhumia* and the *gaita*. A footnote to p. 453 of the *Chanda District Gazetteer* by the then Court of Wards Manager of the zamindari thus describes the latter process:

> 'The *Bhumia* is a Maria institution. He is the man responsible for all the religious ceremonies of the village; all the arrangements for their observance are framed by him, but the actual ceremony cannot be carried out without the help of the *pujari* of the village. In return for his services he is paid dues in grain and *mahua* from every tenant in the village. The office used to be hereditary and was transferable by sale or gift. The *Bhumia* was generally a man of great influence, and no village was founded or could hope to thrive without his formal permission. He was very much the headman of the village and the office is even now highly prized. The *Bhumia* is not necessarily always a headman or *Gaita* of a village; sometimes the offices of *Bhumia* and *Gaita* are separate; this separation usually is due to poverty or loss of influence on the part of the *Bhumia* which necessitates the appointment of a man in a stronger position to manage the village, though the *Bhumia* still continues to draw his dues so long as he has not sold or transferred his right. *Gaita* is the term in general use for headman or *patel*. Before the estate came under the Court of Wards the *Bhumia* and *Gaita* were a power in the land, and it lay with them to make or mar a village, and the zamindar very seldom, if ever, received his full dues; the *Bhumia* and *Gaita* paid for one plough and cultivated five or six and in many cases also appropriated the rents of tenants who took up lands in the village.
>
> 'This has all changed since the estate came under Court of Wards and the position of the *Bhumia* and *Gaita* have been clearly defined at settlement. The former is now purely and simply considered a religious official, and has no connexion with land whatever; the office is hereditable but not transferable and the original appointment of a *Bhumia* to a waste village rests with the zamindar. The *Gaita* is now simply a headman or *patel*, who is paid a commission of two annas in the rupee on rentals and one anna in the rupee on *siwai* (miscellaneous) income as remuneration for his services.'

There could scarcely be a clearer example of administration divorced from anthropology. Imagine deliberately dissociating the *Bhumia*, the Earth-priest, from the land or *bhum*. Fortunately tribal custom has still proved too strong for the complete success of this 'reform'.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
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241 735 economic disaster caused by the arbitrary stopping of their *dahi*, *podu* or *jalapod* cultivation. They said that they did not need this for profit, but to save their lives. 'They urged that if *jalapod* were allowed in a reasonable manner they would always be able to produce enough corn even in years of deficient or irregular rainfall. The men said that in the former days of *jalapod* cultivation they usually cultivated a plot for two years and then left it for five or six years, within which short period *palas*[1] and other forest growth grew high enough for them to cut and burn again.'[2]

● 177 291 Mirkal, Pirmeli and surrounding villages are within the orbit of Allapilli and Ahiri, and the average Maria was clearly exposed to Hindu culture contact, of which the outward sign was the wearing of coats and shorts purchased from Ahiri market or from itinerant Mahar pedlars.

342 The *District Gazetteer* records that the Maria house in the remoter parts of the zamindaris is occasionally very substantial, with walls formed of barked logs laid horizontally and kept in position by upright posts, the interstices being daubed with mud and the whole being thatched with jungle grass.[3] There still are many substantial huts in the villages between Allapilli and Lahiri, but I formed the impression that the standard of housing had deteriorated, possibly because of stricter regulation of felling of trees for domestic purposes.

273 656 [405] On the twenty-three miles drive from Pirmeli to Bhamragarh we passed several villages rich in toddy palms, and often saw Marias climbing the tree trunks by rough 'ladders' lashed to the trunks consisting of bamboo stems with the stumps of their side-shoots cut short to act as rungs. The climbers carry, slung round their waist and hanging down like tails, thick bamboo tubes to catch the tapped juice, as described on page 168, sometimes also they take up big gourd bottles. The Provincial Government has for a long time pursued a wiser excise policy in South Chanda than in other tribal areas, of allowing Marias free tree-tapping licences for domestic consumption in certain scheduled villages. The licences are valid for three years and the number of trees that may be tapped is restricted according to the population of the village and the number of trees available for tapping. This applies in much of the Maria country to the *caryotis urens* or sago-palm, the juice of which, as in Bastar, is much preferred to that of the ordinary toddy palm. This privilege had been accorded only to 239 villages of Sironcha tahsil and 58 of Garchiroli tahsil. The selection of villages had been somewhat eclectic; some large villages with only a small Maria or

[1] *Butea frondosa*.
[2] *The Aboriginal Problem*, p. 185.
[3] *Chanda District Gazetteer* (Allahabad, 1909), p. 202.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
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pen corresponding in number to the number of gods of the god-group, and apparently no domestic cult except of the Departed. As you go northwards beyond Surjagarh or north-westwards towards Chand the Marias begin to understand the meaning of god-grouping and of *shoulder pen*, but even there seemed to me—admittedly my enquiries were superficial—to have no such vital interest in these things as a typical Raj-Gond or Dhurve Gond. This would be explicable on a theory that this god-grouping was something gradually imposed, not necessarily deliberately, but by infiltration and imitation, by the Gonds of the ruling house of Chanda and the aristocratic Gond zamindars, under the feudal system grouped about the Chanda Maharaja, upon the whole 'Maria' substratum of the Gonds of Chanda. The Marias probably represent one or two early waves of Gond migration southwards or, at least the Hill Marias, an earlier pre-Gond race with Veddid, Malid or Munda affinities.[1] There are differences between Chanda Hill Maria and plains Maria speech, the former being as guttural as Bastar Hill Maria; but all Chand Marias speak a form of Gondi very different from the Gondi of the Raj and Dhruve Gonds of Chanda, which would support the view that the latter represent different waves of migration, later moreover in view of their very advanced social and political organisation and their aristocratic elements: compare also the position of the Pardhan bards and musicians in Raj-Gond life with their rarity in Maria villages. It is probable also that the ancestors of many who now are called Raj-Gonds a few generations back were Maria. The *Gazetteer*[2] mentions that though Marias do not now (1909) intermarry with Raj-Gonds, the records of the Ahiri family show that they once did so. The very term Raj-Gond in my view, as expressed on page 36, arose from the process still common whereby [177] as sections of aboriginal tribes became Hinduised or acquired political power they distinguish themselves from the main body of their original tribe, so as to fit into the caste system. There can be little doubt that as the Raj-Gond kingdom of Chanda grew in power leading local Gond or Maria headmen or elders who fitted into the social organisation of the kingdom came to be regarded as Raj-Gond: compare also the discussion earlier in this Note[3] of the meaning of the term 'Maria' and its disappearance in Drug district terminology in very recent times.[4] What, therefore, could be more

[1] Comparable with, for example, the Kolams of Hyderabad and Berar, or the Hill Reddis of Hyderabad, Madras and Orissa. The late Bishop Wood on hearing Bastar Marias talk said that to him it sounded like Gondi spoken with Mundari accent and intonation. See also R. C. Roy on pp. 317-18.

[2] *Chanda District Gazetteer* (Allahabad, 1909) p. 101

[3] P. 377.

[4] P. 378.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
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to be a definite infiltration of Bison-horn Maria influences from Bastar. The illustration in this Supplement shows some of the Lahiri Maria girls and gives some indication of the quantity and Bison-horn style of the ornaments.

Before climbing to Kuvakodi I had sent some Marias up the valley to Nugur village in Kutru Mar, on the Indrawati banks, to invite to my camp the Kuruk boatmen who had taken Dr. Mitchell and myself in their canoes in November 1927, down the river from Nugur to the Jitam rapids.[1] Tati Ogha and Rajintappa, the leaders of our 1927 ' fleet ', and several of the boatmen arrived at Lahiri that evening, and recognized me, after thirteen years, with tears of joy. They were received and made at home with the utmost courtesy—that almost stately courtesy so characteristic of the Gond, whether of Marias at a feast or of Betul Gonds receiving the bride's party at the bridegroom's village; although the Bastar Hill Marias look down on Kuruks or ' Jharaman ' (netters), the Lahiri headmen could not do enough for these Kuruks, giving them the best of the food, refilling their leaf-cups with *mahua* spirit, and showing a real delight when I tied a *pagri* on each Kuruk's head, and presented them with cloth and beads, while they insisted on the strangers getting the best places from which to watch the dancing.

The motor journey from Lahiri to Surjagarh, about 59 miles in all, involved a return on our outward tracks through Bhamragarh to a point three miles east of Pirmeli, thence roughly north or north-west through Kandar, Burgi and Markel villages to Chukmitapalli, and thence due east through Hitawara to Surjagarh; despite a very early start we reached Surjagarh after dark, thanks to ' receptions ' in every intervening village and, above all, to delays for treating yaws patients. All these Maria villages have excellent human material, and some surprises for the visitor. At Burgi, for example, a boy dashed off to his house to emerge as a uniformed boy scout! Some years before an attempt to start a boy scout movement in Ahiri zamindari had met with some initial success, but had apparently died out. Yet this boy had carefully preserved his uniform in a leaf-box, and, more hopeful, he and some other boys had preserved the memory of the lessons they had had on cleanliness and hygiene and in a minor way were still influencing the villages to carry out what they had learnt. It is often assumed that the Marias and similar men of the backwoods have never seen anything of the outer world. Comparable with the visit of a party of Bastar Hill Marias to the Allahabad Exhibition mentioned on page 71, was the fact that this boy and some other Maria youths had been taken two or three years before to a scout jamboree at Delhi. When I asked

[1] See p. 164.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
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him his chief impression of Delhi, he spoke of the Kutb Minar, which he told me was almost as fine and tall as the factory chimney of the Allapilli saw-mills! Either at Burgi or the next village another phenomenon was a Maria in a good tweed coat above khaki shorts and stockings with flashes, wearing over all an excellent fawn Curzon topi with a dark brown pugaree, far smarter than I have ever owned. I discovered that his clothes had all been given him by the zamindari of Ahiri, when he had become a member of the Sironcha Independent Local Board. That night, still in his fine feathers, he came to see the dancing in my camp at Surjagarh: but as the drumming swelled and the dances warmed up he found himself unable to keep up the detachment appropriate to his pseudo-*sahib* status, and gradually divested himself of topi, coat, shirt and shoes, finally peeling off his shorts to reveal beneath them the usual abbreviated loin-cloth of the Maria, seizing a drum, and joining in the dance: he was then indistinguishable from any other Maria but for his air of authority as a headman, and his 'undress' was typically Maria, as described in the *Gazetteer*[1]:—

> 'Their dress is scanty, consisting of a compromise between a *langoti* and a *dhoti*, a strip of cloth wound tightly round the waist in rope-like folds and passed between the legs with the spare end hanging down in front below the knees. Often this garment diminishes to the scantiest rag. They adorn their necks with handsome strings of beads and their arms occasionally with metal and glass bangles. Their ears are pulled out of shape by the weight of numerous brass rings with which they are usually garnished, and occasionally they wear *pagris*.'

This Independent Local Board for the Sironcha taluq consisted then of eighteen members, of whom only six were aboriginals, although there were 3,354 aboriginal to 2,850 non-aboriginal voters. The aboriginal members were almost all returned unopposed, and were *de facto* the nominees of the zamindar, who had had to use his full influence to persuade them to join this peculiar body! It was in the circumstances no surprise discovery that the open, mainly non-aboriginal, country around Sironcha and Ahiri got far more benefit from the Board's expenditure and services than the wild interior of Ahiri zamindari. But the Maria members were utterly illiterate and at sea in the Board meetings. It was the zamindar's influence alone that secured for the Maria areas such services as the Board gave them. Nevertheless, the mere fact that there is an independent local authority for Sironcha tahsil secures that at least this tahsil does get spent on it all that it pays in cesses and other local taxes, and a fair share of Government grants to local bodies, in marked contrast to the fate of the zamindaris of Garchiroli tahsil, who come under the tender mercies of the Chanda District Council

[1] *Chanda District Gazetteer* (Allahabad, 1909), p. 99.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
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the later waves of Gonds and Raj-Gonds which set up the kingdom of the Gond Maharajas of Chanda. It would be very interesting also to see whether anything survives of the peculiarly Hill Maria and Muria cult of the clan-god as distinct from the more developed religious system of the Raj-Gonds, with its wonderful foundation of myth, the full richness and religious and cultural significance of which the world will begin to realize when Haimendorf's epoch-making book on the Raj-Gonds of Adilabad is published in the near future, and when it is followed up by similar detailed investigation of Gond life and custom in all parts of Gondwana. How far there is any common mythological basis of Raj-Gond and Maria culture would be a factor of great significance. I am conscious that the weakest side of this book has been its failure to probe into the mythology and folk-songs of the Bastar Marias. I do not believe Hill Maria culture to be nearly as rich in that respect as Muria culture is shown to be by Verrier Elwin's book, *The Muria and their Ghotul*. Yet there must be more to be said of the folk-tales and mythology of the Marias of Bastar than has appeared in the first edition of this book; indeed the second section of Elwin's Comment in this edition gives some indication of the wealth of Maria myth awaiting record in Bastar.

Another question clearly needing investigation is the extent to which the *gotul* as an institution is a real factor in Chanda Maria life. I have implied in this Note that it survives, but is gradually being relegated into obscurity as a result of the impact of Hindu ideas and of Hindu ridicule. That would, however, apply more in the northern zamindaris than in the country along the Bastar border from the River Indrawati north to Jharapapra. This part of Ahiri zamindari is landlocked and largely protected from the influx of Hindu ideas save in so far as these are brought in by zamindari and government subordinates. The fact moreover that the *Sendhia* and *patti panchayat* organization is still vigorous in Ahiri zamindari should be an indication that there has been no psychological inhibition on these Marias preserving their tribal life and cultural inheritance unimpaired. It would be interesting, however, to trace the outer boundaries of the *gotul* system and to see what has happened to it, when, and why, in these outer fringes.

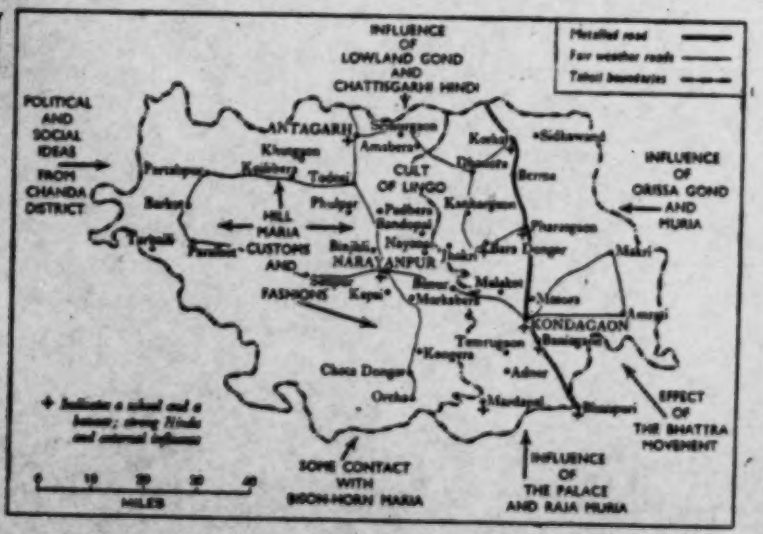
This Note is stronger in its picture of economic conditions. Here the most significant fact has been the banning of *jalapod* or shifting cultivation during and after the Great War of 1914-18. One would like, given the time and opportunity, to get at the psychological reaction of the Maria to this as expressed in his folk-songs; one would like also to be able to go through the records of criminal

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

INTRODUCTION

celebrations in Jagdalpur. Many—but not all—of these people are aboriginal in everything but name; in feature, colour, dress and manners they are hardly to be distinguished from their Muria neighbours.

The Lohar living in Muria villages are generally tribal Lohar, not members of the great Hindu caste that bears this name. Muria and Maria who take to iron-work are separated from the rest of the tribe and have now been formed into an endogamous community of their own. The Muria generally regard the Muria-Lohar as somewhat inferior, but their antagonism does not go so far as to ban Lohar boys and girls from the ghotul. In 1941 there were 7877 Lohar in the whole State and 2718 in the two Muria tahsils.



SKETCH-MAP TO ILLUSTRATE THE INFLUENCES AFFECTING THE LIFE AND CUSTOMS OF THE MURIA

Many *Kalar* are obviously aboriginals who have taken to the liquor business. Well-to-do Muria occasionally take contracts for distilling and selling mahua spirit. There are 13,451 Kalar in the whole State.

The Ghasia, of whom there are only 1704, are regarded with considerable scorn by the aboriginals who suspect them of desecrating their graves to obtain the 'grave-furniture' buried with the corpses. Yet they owe much to this caste, which is responsible for making, by the *cire-perdue* process, the brass images and horns used in Muria worship, buttock-bells for dancing and ladles for serving liquor.

The Pardhan. There are only a few members of this most interesting tribe, allied to but distinct from the Gond, in Bastar. But there is a Pardhan

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
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THE MURIA'S LIVELIHOOD

The Field-houses

In many places, regular field-houses (*kotul*) are built with proper roofs and even walls. For long periods the whole family goes to live in these; there is no taboo on women, even on menstruating women, provided they do not enter the fields in this condition. Here the family cooks, works and lives.

But women are not permitted to go to the *tondi*. These little platforms, raised ten or twelve feet above the ground on poles—'the four brothers have one top-knot'[1]—are generally roofed, and furnished with a mat, a pot for fire, some firewood. The only two places where a Muria boy sleeps regularly are the ghotul and the *tondi*. During the season when the crops are ripening, the ghotul are almost deserted by the chelik who are all on duty in the fields. The rule against their taking a motiari with them is not due to the fear that she may distract their attention from their duties—Muria girls are not accustomed to do that—but because of the danger of her beginning her menstrual period on the platform and so ruining the crops. But it is, of course, very necessary for the chelik to keep awake. An old woman at Masora said, 'When my son goes to watch the fields, I fill his belly with gruel: then he has to piss all night, and keeps awake to drive away the pigs'. It is not taboo to have sexual intercourse in a field; on the other hand, I do not think there is any idea that such a thing would assist the crops.

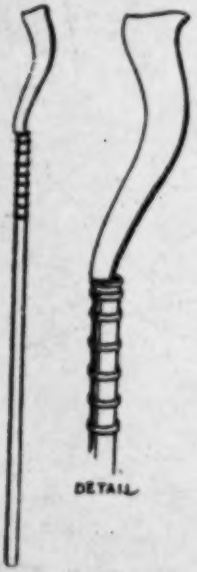

FIG. 3. Gagra used for cutting grass and brushwood
Length 3' 9"

The chelik climbs up onto the platform by a bamboo pole similar to those used for the sago-palms. Sometimes he has a pulley of ropes to haul up food, water and firewood.

From the *tondi* there are often elaborate arrangements of strings, stretching right round the field—a jerk sets a number of clappers banging or scarecrows swinging.

The fields are also protected by magic methods. A gourd, broom and leaf-cup may be hung up together, or a jackal's head,[2] or a black pot decorated with white lines to avert ghosts hostile to fertility.

Permanent Cultivation

The Muria, as I have said, are not dependent on their axe-cultivation. Nearly all of them now have permanent fields, used mostly for rice. Yet even where, as in parts of Kondagaon, axe-cultivation has been largely abandoned,

[1] Another riddle about the *tondi*: 'There are elephant's bones in the middle of the field.'

[2] W. V. Grigson writes to me: 'Equally common is the use of the dried skull of cow or bullock. In Bastar such skulls have been described to me as *kharchelar*, the term being explained by ideas derived from Hinduism that because in some former incarnation a man had died without paying his debts, when reborn as a cow or a bullock, his skull in this way was working off the old debt by such service after death.'

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to its prey, to protect the boys and girls going out on dancing expeditions, to ensure that the drum gives its accustomed thunder. Life and death are thus united by these beliefs and rites, and the whole of existence is seen as a single sequence where physical death is but an incident which in no way disturbs the continuity of interest or relationship. 769

V. Funerary Rites

In the west, Muria death customs are dominated by Hill Maria influence. In Amgaon, the Jhoria Muria said that their funerary rites were 'things of the Maria Raj'. As we move east, where the Muria population probably represents an earlier Gond immigration from the north, customs are not unlike those typical of the Gond of the Central Provinces. The north-east of Bastar, however, has been more open to Hindu influence and it is not always easy to tell what the original traditions were. 764 177

The Muria bury important people, little children, chelik and motiari, and the victims of small-pox. They cremate all others. They lay the corpse, whether of man or woman, on its back with the head to the east. At Padbera, the Gaita said, 'It is because we came from the east. East is "up" and west is "down".' 764 766

Members of each clan and either sex are disposed in separate places. Those who die from unusual causes are taken far away into the jungle. In Palari I was told that the remains of a tiger's victim should be burnt on the actual scene of death. Usually the corpse is placed under a mahua tree. 764

I will first describe one of the several funerals that I have witnessed, and then give any variations that I have recorded elsewhere.

On the night of 8 December 1940, in Bauri, a village of the Abujhmar foothills, a woman of about forty years named Dhako, the wife of Genjru of the Wadder clan, died and was carried home on a rough litter to her husband's house at Amgaon. She had died of 'a watery swelling of the body', perhaps dropsy, which is generally regarded as a punishment for adultery. The people were very reticent about speaking of the cause of her death and I never was able to hear the real story.

Since it is taboo for a woman to sleep on a cot, Dhako died on the ground and was again laid on the floor of her own house covered with a sheet. Many women, assembled in the house and outside in the street, wailed loudly from time to time. Gradually the relatives gathered and, when all were there, the corpse was carried out on a bamboo mat into the courtyard. Six women sat round weeping. An old woman of the Wadder clan (which can marry with the Partabi clan to which the dead woman originally belonged), but not a member of the family, now tied a little rice and a cowrie in knots on either side of the cloth. There were three knots on each side joined by a thread which ran criss-cross over the body. They did not bathe the corpse nor close the eyes, but the woman's little daughter, a child about five years old, put haldi on her mother's face, and the other female relatives present did the same.

Meanwhile a group of chelik, most of whom were related to Genjru, were busy making a sort of ladder to serve as bier. This they covered with dry grass. The corpse was lifted out and placed upon it. The chelik took it on their shoulders and went into the jungle followed by both men and women. Genjru's younger sister followed immediately behind the bier throwing rice over it. Another woman carried a basket containing three different roots and bits of haldi.

2: Elwin .E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
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her catamenial period, and so Pendrawandin is considered by many an untouchable goddess. 776

The famous Kanda Dokara, father of Lingo, came into being in a very simple way. This is the story they tell at Kuntpadar. 773

> There were seven brothers and their wives. One day the women went to the jungle for grass to make brooms. Six of them made big bundles and put them on their heads to carry home, but the youngest wife only made a very small bundle and was unable to lift it. She called the others and they could not lift it either. Then she said, 'Whether you are god or devil, let me lift this bundle and when I get home I'll give you food-sacrifice'.
>
> When she reached home she was afraid that her husband would be angry with her for bringing such a small bundle, so she threw it into the pigsty. When her husband asked her where her grass was, she said, 'Who knows what was the matter; there was some god or ghost in it; I threw it into the pigsty'. The husband went laughing to get it, but when he too could not lift it up, he said, 'If you are really a god, give me a son'. Then he undid the grass and found inside a root, and they all worshipped it. Afterwards the Muria had twelve sons, the eldest of whom was Kanda Dokara and the youngest Lingo. He used to carry the root with him as a weapon. This is why we swear by the grass in a broom and use it to find out why we are ill and where our cattle have strayed.

Such is a typical account of the origin of the gods. There is a difficulty: sometimes it is an epidemic, sometimes it is some lighter matter as in the story I have just recounted. But always the god manifests himself by causing some hitch in the smooth working of human life. In Adner in 1940, there was an outbreak of cattle disease and the Siraha-mediums declared that a new god had been born, and was not receiving his due honour. A great festival, which I will presently describe, was held to appease the affronted deity and stop the disease.

Any strange or inexplicable event may bring a new god into being; the subdivisions of clans, the migration of peoples, the desire to imitate the Hindus are equally potent in the creation of gods. We must now consider the nature of these gods and who they are.

III. The Nature of the Gods

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[524]

There is only one tree, but it gives many kinds of leaves—
A god (deo) that causes many kinds of trouble.—Muria riddle.

The gods of the Muria, as we have seen, are many and varied. The majority of them are, I think, comparatively modern. Some have been imported, some are the result of Hindu influence, some have come into being as a result of dreams, some at a magician's whim. It is only the Earth, the Dead, the clan-god and the Maharaja which are ancient and fundamental to Muria worship and belief. [171]

But many other gods are worshipped, the extent of their cult and the notice they receive depending on the instructions given by the Siraha from time to time. For just as Muria ceremonies are not arranged in a precise formulary but rather make up a repertory from which the priest on the instructions of the Siraha will draw what he requires, so also the vast pantheon of the Muria may be regarded as a sort of repertory of deities out of which, from

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TWO TYPES OF GHOTUL

In a certain number of ghotul, particularly those all round the boundary of the Muria area, where the villagers have come under strong Chhattisgarhi and Oriya or Jagdalpur influence, the girls probably never sleep in the ghotul, but this is the sort of thing about which it is impossible to be sure. In some Hindu villages also, where there is only a small Muria population, the motiari return home regularly in order to avoid the ridicule of their Hindu neighbours. This is particularly true of the north and east of the Kondagaon Tahsil.

In some villages the ghotul has been abandoned altogether. The reasons for this vary. In the south-east of Kondagaon, where many of the Muria in villages approaching the borders of Jagdalpur Tahsil are becoming Bhattra, they naturally have given up the ghotul as an institution. In Kanera, for example, where the Bhattra movement is strong, there is no ghotul building though the boys sleep together in somebody's house and the girls still come to dance and to massage them. In the Amrati and Makri Parganas a number of villages have gone Bhattra with a consequent closing of the ghotul.

Then throughout the Mardapal Pargana, except in one or two villages, Esalnar for example, there have been no ghotul within living memory. This is more curious because the Mardapal Pargana is closely linked to the Chota Dongar and other Jhoria Parganas. The boys and girls dress and dance in Jhoria fashion; they have the same games; they go to the same festivals as the chelik and motiari of the villages to the north and west of them, but they do not have the ghotul system.

Sometimes magic or the fear of it is the cause of a dormitory being abandoned. There is no ghotul in Barbatta, for at one time many of the chelik and motiari died of an epidemic. It is said, however, that they still sleep together in a private house in the village. In Barkai a jealous Kalarin witch made black magic against the ghotul and many of the boys and girls were taken ill. They made the necessary sacrifices and all was well for two months. They fell ill again and this time they built a new ghotul, but there was still trouble. So now the dormitory is closed altogether. At Lihagaon continued epidemics, which naturally spread quickly in the confined conditions of the dormitory, combined with several scandals, resulted in the abandonment of any special building, though the chelik and motiari continue much of their life without it. At Morohnar, the Malik made his motiari pregnant and went to live in Kanera. At Kanera he eloped with another girl and married her. 'This angered the gods, and the chelik and motiari of Morohnar fell ill.' The ghotul was shut for two months, re-opened, the members fell ill again, and it was finally closed.

Sometimes outside interference is the cause. At Dahikonga, the Hindu landlord forced the Muria to destroy their ghotul. At Selnar, where there is a primary school, the teachers have succeeded in driving the ghotul life underground and all that clean, healthy, happy existence has yielded to furtive meetings on verandahs and in the fields. In Pendrawand, the ghotul was closed under the influence of outsiders from across the border, but the boys and girls use a dilapidated Thana-gudi when it is unoccupied.[1]

[1] Somewhat similar causes have led to the abandonment of the *dhumkuria* dormitories in several Uraon villages. In Kumbhar Tola, a Hinduized Uraon village only four miles from Ranchi, there was no *dhumkuria*. In a village near the Jashpur border, where there was a large Church, and in another village near Lohadaga, the people professed that they had not even heard the word *dhumkuria* and an elderly Uraon became quite offensive at the suggestion that there was such a thing in his village. At Agru I saw the ruined building of a dormitory which had been abandoned, because they could not afford, so they said, to replace the roof. But since at Agru there was a fine dancing-floor, there was probably some other reason—a mysterious death, or a scandal—which accounted for the *dhumkuria*'s collapse. Roy says that 'in one village we were told that long ago a

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
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GHOTUL MEMBERSHIP AND RULES

X 883 with flour. At Karanji the Sirdar and Baidar had to escort the motiari when they went to the forest to gather leaves for plates and cups, and the Jamadar had to arrange for small boys and girls to carry the drums when they went to some other village for a dance. At Baniagaon, the Matatgar had to look after the drums; the Baidarin arranged how the motiari were to comb and massage the boys in the evenings; the Kotwar and Chalan were the lawyers who regularly appeared to defend girls accused of some breach of ghotul discipline.

X 883 539 In a song recorded at Gawari, there is a reference to the duty of the Jaramkal and Supedar, who in this ghotul have to escort the girls when they go to fetch leaves. This is the Aking Koyana Karse Pata and, as they sing it, the motiari pretend to be picking leaves.

Sir pula helo dori ned weke dākāt roy sango ned weke dākāt roy?	Where are you going today, friends?
Sir pula helo dori marm āking dākāt roy sango marm āking dākāt roy.	We are going to pick leaves for the wedding.
Sir pula helo dori won tori oykāt roy sango won tori oykāt roy?	Who are you taking with you, friends?
Sir pula helo dori jaramkal supedār sango jaramkal supedār roy.	We are taking Jaramkal and Supedar.

X 883 551 In some ghotul, boys' titles are given to girls. At Taragaon and Atargaon, the two leading girls are called Malik and Chalan; they are the 'ghotul wives' of boy-leaders bearing the same names. At Rengagondi, the three chief girls are called Malik, Kotwar and Chalau for the same reason. In Nariha, the girls' leader is called Chalau. These villages are in the Chota Dongar and Mardapal Parganas, and the custom seems confined to that area. But in ghotul, especially in the neighbourhood of Kondagaon, where the boys and girls 'pair off', it is not uncommon (as we have already seen at Esalnar) for girls to take names which are really equivalent to the English 'Mrs'. Thus, in Pirapal and Haddigaon, girls are called Kotwarin (or Mrs Kotwar, the ghotul-wife of the Kotwar), Supedarin (or Mrs Supedar) and Mukhwanin.

X 883 551 177 The ghotul titles are linguistically a very mixed collection. A. N. Mitchell, who has traced the derivation and meanings of a list drawn from over a hundred ghotul in every part of the Muria area, has derived them from Urdu, Hindi, Halbi, Gondi and English. The English titles are generally corruptions of names used by State officials; thus Captan, or Captain, is the name by which the State Superintendent of Police is usually known in the villages; Engineer is the head of the P.W.D.; Dakdar is the local Assistant Surgeon; Orsel is the Overseer of work on the roads. Urdu and Hindi titles for excise, revenue and military officers are common, and so are the Hindi titles for such subordinates as the constable, watchman, headman, or forest-guard. It is curious that the title Kotwar, which in Muria villages is often held by a despised Ganda or Mahara, is in the ghotul usually an indication of importance.

X 883 551 Gondi names are more common among girls than boys. Among boys' titles we may notice Belumdar, owner of a *bāri* or garden, Ghotulsai—lord of the ghotul, Neliya—a good fellow, and the very common variants of Laharu which seems to imply in Gondi a 'dandy' or Don Juan, the word being derived from the Hindi *lahariya*, striped cloth, the wearing of which is regarded as very fast and 'advanced'. Some of the Gondi titles seem more like nicknames than anything else—thus Uden or Kude, meaning someone who sits down

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
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boys and girls. They dance clasped in each other's arms; they go about together, chelik with his arm round the neck of motiari. How revealing are Plates LXXV and XCI. In one a chelik lies on a cot with his arm on his motiari's shoulder, while she sits almost on top of him making leaves. They were not posed for the photo, and they showed no embarrassment at my approach with the mysterious camera, even though they were from a village I did not know well. In the other Plate two chelik and a motiari are listening to the gramophone outside my tent. They are completely absorbed in it and in each other. One of the boys embraces the girl with both his arms. You would not see this natural innocence in the more 'advanced' parts of aboriginal India.

But this refreshing freedom never degenerates into immodesty in public. It would be unthinkable for a chelik to dance naked—as I have seen older men do—in the presence of women or of his elders. The motiari never indulge in the cheerful vulgarity of the old women at a wedding. A chelik never catches hold of a girl immodestly in general company, though he will embrace her and walk with his arms about her. The great festival dances, though the air is full of romantic suggestion and the older men dance with the greatest licence, are conducted by chelik and motiari with complete decorum.

The sympathetic reader will realize how hopeless it is to bring our cut-and-dried judgments of sexual morality to bear upon a situation such as this. But he will also realize that even on his own standards the ghotul cannot be called immoral in the sense that it has no rules or laws or that it ignores those it has. Its regulations are as far-reaching and as strict as our own, and they are often better kept. For the rules are not imposed from without, but have been made by the ghotul-members themselves. Thus they are reasonable, adapted to the actual situation, and so easy to obey.

It is curious that while a Western visitor to a Muria village, if he is of a Puritan turn, will probably be chiefly concerned about the pre-nuptial relations of the children, the Hindu visitor—who is, of course, by far the more frequent—will be scandalized by the casual attitude of the Muria towards cows. Many years ago earnest efforts were made by Hindu reformers in the State to stop cow-sacrifice, and still today—though the majority of State officials preserve an admirable restraint in interfering with tribal customs—landlords, merchants, schoolmasters and travellers do what they can to put an end to the practice. But, except for a few centres where Hindu influence is strong, bulls and cows continue to be sacrificed and eaten all over the northern part of the State. The Muria cannot believe that this is wrong, for the gods demand it. There is nothing in their culture or mythology to forbid it—and indeed we here have a good example of the difficulty of importing a new idea into a system that has no provision for it. Yet if the Muria ever does ponder about 'moral' problems it is this that perplexes him and not any question about pre-nuptial chastity.

Stealing is generally condemned, but it is licensed on some special occasions. The chelik are expected to steal a cock when they take the newly-wedded bride and bridegroom to bed; they appear to have similar licence when they perform ceremonial dances round the village.

The incidence of crime is very low. An experienced police officer, who had served in the ghotul area for twelve years, told me that in all this time there had been no case of murder, riot, assault, hurt, or rape in connexion with the ghotul. There has not been a single case of rape against a Muria, though non-aboriginals have been arrested for raping Muria women. It is a remarkable thing that most of the crime in the Kondagaon and Narayanpur Tahsils occurs

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
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considered the psychological aspect of the matter.' The *morung*, in Mills' view, takes the place of the father as a disciplinarian and thus relieves for the Naga one of the 'great stresses of the family complex'.[1] 'It is unfortunate', says J. H. Hutton, 'that the change of faith which attends missionary effort should lead to the abandonment of art in wood-carving, dancing, song (hymns, of course, excepted), and ornament, while even more serious perhaps in the Assam Hills is the Christian opposition to the institution of the bachelors' house, where the male youths of the tribe are educated in the conduct and the traditions which enable them to live a life suited to their environment and to continue the social organization on which the communal life of the village depends. The inevitable result is the disintegration of the village community and the sacrifice of communal to personal interests.'[2]

In Bastar, the ghotul may in years to come be threatened not so much by missionaries as by well-meaning but rather unintelligent social reformers and politicians in a hurry. It is doubtful also how long this aboriginal fortress will be able to hold out, not against true civilization, but against that parody of it which characterises the low-caste non-aboriginal villages of the vicinity.

Even if the ghotul were something far less valuable, instead of being the focus of all that is most vital in Muria life, interference with it would be undesirable. Any who wish to 'improve' or 'uplift' such people as the Muria should consider the wise words of Henry Balfour:

> The decay of old customs too often involves for the [people] loss of pride and interest in themselves and their past traditions; virility gives way to listlessness and apathy, a state which is now recognized as one of the potent factors in promoting depopulation. The arbitrary suppression of all traditional customs, ceremonies, and dances . . . is a short-sighted and retrograde policy. It strikes at the root of practically the whole social structure of the people, and its effects are apt to prove disastrous.[3]

The village dormitory is a symptom of a certain stage of cultural development. We ourselves consider that we have outgrown it; we may grow into it again. In the days when I shared the free and happy life of the Muria I used sometimes to wonder whether I was a hundred years behind the times or a hundred years ahead. I do not suggest that we should replace the Public Schools by ghotul and turn our own children into chelik and motiari, but I do suggest that there are elements in ghotul life and teaching which we should do well to ponder and that an infection of the Muria spirit would do few of us any harm.

The message of the ghotul—that youth must be served, that freedom and happiness are more to be treasured than any material gain, that friendliness and sympathy, hospitality and unity are of the first importance, and above all that human love—and its physical expression—is beautiful, clean and precious, is typically Indian. The ghotul is no Austro-asiatic alien in the Indian scene. Here is the atmosphere of the best old India; here is something of the life (though on a humble scale) portrayed at Ajanta; here is something (though now altogether human) of the Krishna legend and its ultimate significance; this is the same life, the same tradition that inspired the Pahari paintings. Of these paintings, Coomaraswamy, in a passage which might almost have been written about the ghotul, says,

[1] Mills, *The Rengma Nagas*, p. 49.
[2] J. H. Hutton, in *Modern India and the West* (Oxford, 1941), p. 441.
[3] H. Balfour, Foreword to Mills, *The Ao Nagas*, p. xii.

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

closely connected with a certain *bhum* or clan-territory. Each *bhum* has its special headquarters where there should be the temple of the clan-god and the residence of the clan-priest. Here members of the clan should bring some token of their Dead and come to celebrate the great clan festivals. The clan-gods are known as Anga or Pen, and are of peculiar shape and character. They consist of three parallel logs attached to one another by cross-bars and decorated with silver bands and peacock feathers, the central log being carved into the rude likeness of a snake or bird. These gods are realistically imagined. They marry and have children; they move from place to place; they have a flair for detecting witches and other criminals. I do not know of any case where the Anga was used to track down a murder, but they are often employed to discover thefts and surprise the secrets of black magic.

The Bison-horn Maria are divided into a number of phratries and clans, resembling those of the Gond and other tribes. Grigson recorded five phratries, the Marvi, the Kuhrami, the Sori, the Markami and the Kawasi. Each of these is connected with a totem, the Marvi with the goat in some villages and the cobra in others, the Kuhrami with the cuckoo, the Sori with the tiger and the Markami and Kawasi with the tortoise. The subordinate clans, of which there are a large number—Grigson did not record quite all of them—are divided among these phratries and are regulated by the usual rule that regards all the clans of one phratry as related to one another and, therefore, barred from inter-marriages. As I have said, each clan has its special and separate *bhum* or territory, which should be its exclusive possession. But the neat and tidy arrangements of former days have broken down, and now not only are members of several different clans to be found in one village, but members of the clans are widely dispersed and it is often difficult for them even to visit their clan-god and make the proper sacrifices with the help of the clan-priest, the Waddai, or attend the special festivals for the clan-god.

The Maria year is enriched and diversified by a long series of agricultural and other festivals. At the beginning of the year falls the Bhimul Pandum held in honour of the traditional rain-giver of central India. There follows a ceremony

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

III

NOTE ON THE INDIAN PENAL CODE

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671 The law dealing with offences affecting human life is fully set out in Sections 299 to 311 of the Indian Penal Code, and I will quote a part of this for the convenience of Western readers.

299. Whoever causes death by doing an act with the intention of causing death, or with the intention of causing such bodily injury as is likely to cause death, or with the knowledge that he is likely by such act to cause death, commits the offence of culpable homicide.

300. Except in the cases hereinafter excepted, culpable homicide is murder, if the act by which the death is caused is done with the intention of causing death, or—

Secondly—If it is done with the intention of causing such bodily injury as the offender knows to be likely to cause the death of the person to whom the harm is caused, or—

Thirdly—If it is done with the intention of causing bodily injury to any person and the bodily injury intended to be inflicted is sufficient in the ordinary course of nature to cause death, or—

Fourthly—If the person committing the act knows that it is so imminently dangerous that it must in all probability cause death, or such bodily injury as is likely to cause death, and commits such act without any excuse for incurring the risk of causing death or such injury aforesaid.

Exception 1.—Culpable homicide is not murder if the offender, whilst deprived of the power of self-control by grave and sudden provocation, causes the death of the person who gave the provocation, or causes the death of any other person by mistake or accident.

The above exception is subject to the following provises:—

First—That the provocation is not sought or voluntarily provoked by the offender as an excuse for killing or doing harm to any person.

Secondly—That the provocation is not given by anything done in obedience to the law, or by a public servant in the lawful exercise of the powers of such public servant.

Thirdly—That the provocation is not given by anything done in the lawful exercise of the right of private defence.

Exception 2.—Culpable homicide is not murder if the offender, in the exercise in good faith of the right of private defence of person or property, exceeds the power given to him by law and causes the death of the person against whom he is exercising such right of defence without premeditation, and without any intention of doing more harm than is necessary for the purpose of such defence.

Exception 3.—Culpable homicide is not murder if the offender, being a public servant or aiding a public servant acting for the advancement of public justice, exceeds the powers given to him by law, and causes death by doing an act which he, in good faith, believes to be lawful and necessary for the due discharge of his duty as such public servant and without ill-will towards the person whose death is caused.

Exception 4.—Culpable homicide is not murder if it is committed without premeditation in a sudden fight in the heat of passion upon

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
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a sudden quarrel and without the offender's having taken undue advantage or acted in a cruel or unusual manner. 177 671

Exception 5.—Culpable homicide is not murder when the person whose death is caused, being above the age of eighteen years, suffers death or takes the risk of death with his own consent.

302. Whoever commits murder shall be punished with death, or transportation for life, and shall also be liable to fine.

304. Whoever commits culpable homicide not amounting to murder, shall be punished with transportation for life, or imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to ten years, and shall also be liable to fine, if the act by which the death is caused is done with the intention of causing death, or of causing such bodily injury as is likely to cause death;

or with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to ten years, or with fine, or with both, if the act is done with the knowledge that it is likely to cause death, but without any intention to cause death or to cause such bodily injury as is likely to cause death.

Sir Cecil Walsh considered that these definitions were too complicated for the situations to which they were normally applied. 'The Indian Penal Code has always been considered a masterpiece of codification, and is the admiration of experts in jurisprudence. The beautifully moulded definitions of murder, and of culpable homicide not amounting to murder, set out every phase of thought through which a man's mind may pass when he is engaged in a fight and burning to defeat and injure his enemy. But men do not think aloud in a confused fight when they are "seeing red" and expecting every minute to be knocked out themselves. How are you to apply almost metaphysical processes of reasoning to the mental processes of half-mad savages, when you are not quite sure what the real facts are? In practice, these works of art in draftsmanship break down, and the simple English dichotomy of "murder" or "manslaughter" is to be preferred'.[1]

[1] Walsh, *Crime in India*, pp. 29 f.